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THE CRISIS IN THE FAR EAST

NORMAN MACKENZIE

THE importance of the present crisis in the Far East is not only due to the serious consequences likely to follow as a result of it for Japan and China, and incidentally for the other countries interested there. It is important also because it is the first occasion on which the League of Nations and other post-war methods of preventing war have been put to the test. For this reason I propose to discuss only incidentally the quarrel between Japan and China and to devote most of my attention to the position of the League and its members, as well as of the United States and Russia, in the struggle; and as this may best be done in the light of our own British and Canadian position and policy I propose to deal first with them.

Some time ago Sir John Simon summed up British interests in the Far East in the words "Peace and Trade" and it may be assumed that British policy throughout has been one of so-called "enlightened self interest" in promoting these ends. With this in mind it is worth reviewing briefly the history of that policy during the past century. In 1842 Britain, after a long period of unsatisfactory relations with China, declared war on China in order to open up that country to British trade. Britain's policy ever since has, in the main, been devoted to enlarging the opportunities for trade, and to breaking down Chinese opposition and obstacles to commercial penetration. It is only natural in view of the opposition and obstacles encountered that the feeling of many of those engaged in trade with China, and even of many British officials, should be one of criticism and hostility

toward the Chinese who have made difficulties for them. Britain, too, in common with the other European powers and Japan, toyed with the idea of dividing China up after the manner of Africa, and the Yangtse Basin was generally acknowledged as a British sphere of influence. The later policy of the United States, in the words of one of her statesmen, was "to seek a solution of the difficulties in China which might bring about permanent safety and peace to China, preserve China as a territorial and administrative entity, protect all rights guaranteed to friendly powers by treaty and international law, and safeguard for the world the principle of equal and impartial trade with all parts of the Chinese Empire." The reasons for this attitude are so obvious to every student of American history that I need not repeat them here. However, it is only fair to state on behalf of Britain that Lord Salisbury, then British Prime Minister, expressed himself "most emphatically as agreeing with the policy of the United States."

The relations of Britain with Japan on the other hand have for a number of reasons been entirely different. In the first place it was the Americans who were responsible for forcing Japan to open her doors to the foreigner; secondly, Japanese leaders were quick to realize that they could not withstand the West save by adopting Western methods—which they did very rapidly; thirdly, having been Westernised—in externals at least—Japan became the obvious ally for Britain in her opposition to Russian expansion; and fourthly, Japan did not offer as attractive opportunities for exploitation as China. For these reasons it is easy to understand British pre-war policy toward Japan and China, and the situation in the Far East generally.

The Great War, however, changed all that, as it did

so many other things in international relations, and it is essential to look at the post-war situation in the Far East. In the first place, there is a very real difference of opinion between the Chinese and the other powers claiming rights in China as to the character of those rights. The Chinese feel that they are not in the best interests of China and that they were acquired by force applied in an unfair manner. On this assumption the Chinese have directed their efforts toward ending what they term the "unequal treaties" and the "unfairly acquired rights". As they are not in a position to gain their ends by direct force they have used diplomacy, the boycott, and the policy of "pin-pricks". These methods have been used most effectively against the British and Japanese, but all foreigners have suffered to some extent. The foreigners on the other hand rely on the validity of their claims in international law, even though they admit that their rights were acquired by force and without the consent of China. In the second place, the Great War proved so destructive to all concerned (victors, vanquished and neutrals) that the post-war world looked for other and less costly methods of settling their difficulties. With this in mind they drew up in 1919 the Covenant of the League of Nations, the relevant sections of which are given below.

The High Contracting Parties,

In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security

by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war,

by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations,

by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments,

and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect

for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another,

Agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.

Article 10

The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.

Article 11

1. Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise the Secretary-General shall on the request of any Member of the League forthwith summon a meeting of the Council.

Article 12

1. The Members of the League agree that if there should arise between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture they will submit the matter either to arbitration or judicial settlement or to enquiry by the Council, and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators or the judicial decision or the report of the Council.

2. In any case under this Article the award of the arbitrators or the judicial decision shall be made within a reasonable time, and the report of the Council shall be made within six months after the submission of the dispute.

Article 15

1. If there should arise between the Members of the League any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, which is not submitted to arbitration *or judicial settlement* in accordance with Article 13, the Members of the League agree that they will submit the matter to the Council. Any party to the dispute may effect such submission by giving notice of the existence of the dispute to the

Secretary-General, who will make all necessary arrangements for a full investigation and consideration thereof.

2. For this purpose the parties to the dispute will communicate to the Secretary-General, as promptly as possible, statements of their case with all the relevant facts and papers, and the Council may forthwith direct the publication thereof.

3. The Council shall endeavour to effect a settlement of the dispute, and if such efforts are successful, a statement shall be made public giving such facts and explanations regarding the dispute and the terms of settlement thereof as the Council may deem appropriate.

4. If the dispute is not thus settled, the Council either unanimously or by a majority vote shall make and publish a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto.

5. Any Member of the League represented on the Council may make public a statement of the facts of the dispute and of its conclusions regarding the same.

6. If a report by the Council is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party to the dispute which complies with the recommendations of the report.

7. If the Council fails to reach a report which is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof, other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League reserve to themselves the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice.

8. If the dispute between the parties is claimed by one of them, and found by the Council, to arise out of a matter which by international law is solely within the domestic jurisdiction of that party, the Council shall so report, and shall make no recommendation as to its settlement.

9. The Council may in any case under this Article refer the dispute to the Assembly. The dispute shall be so referred at the request of either party to the dispute provided that such request be made within fourteen days after the submission of the dispute to the Council.

10. In any case referred to the Assembly, all the provisions of this article and of Article 12 relating to the action and powers of

the Council shall apply to the action and powers of the Assembly, provided that a report made by the Assembly, if concurred in by the representatives of those Members of the League, represented on the Council and of a majority of the other Members of the League, exclusive in each case of the representatives of the parties to the dispute, shall have the same force as a report by the Council concurred in by all the members thereof other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute.

Article 16

1. Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenant under Articles 12, 13 or 15, it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not.

2. It shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval, or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League.

3. The Members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under this Article, in order to minimise the loss and inconvenience resulting from the above measures, and that they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the covenant-breaking State, and that they will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the Members of the League which are co-operating to protect the covenants of the League.

4. Any Member of the League which has violated any covenant of the League may be declared to be no longer a Member of the League by a vote of the Council concurred in by the representatives of all the other Members of the League represented thereon.

As the United States was not a party to this, and as the Far East for reasons indicated above was in a very unsettled state, the Powers interested there in 1922 drew up, signed and ratified The Nine Power Treaty, the main provisions of which are as follows:

Article 1

The Contracting Powers, other than China, agree:

(1) To respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China;

(2) To provide the fullest and most unembarrassed opportunity to China to develop and maintain for herself an effective and stable government;

(3) To use their influence for the purpose of effectually establishing and maintaining the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations throughout the territory of China;

(4) To refrain from taking advantage of conditions in China in order to seek special rights or privileges which would abridge the rights of subjects or citizens of friendly States, and from countenancing action inimical to the security of such States.

Article 2

The Contracting Powers agree not to enter into any treaty, agreement, arrangement, or understanding, either with one another, or, individually or collectively, with any Power or Powers, which would infringe or impair the principles stated in Article 1.

As a further safeguard against the possibilities of war, practically all the Powers in the world, including the United States and Russia, in 1928 agreed to the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact of Paris, which is as follows:

Article 1

The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare, in the names of their respective peoples, that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another.

Article 2

The High Contracting Parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts, of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means.

In the third place, due to the development of nationalism and to the popularity of the principle of self-determination in China, and to a changed attitude among many in Britain toward Imperialism, official British policy in China since the war has been directed, in the main, toward the creation of a friendly feeling between Britain and China, on the assumption that a friend makes a better customer than an enemy. For this reason Great Britain has not only been a willing party to all of the treaties providing for the maintenance of peace in the world and the satisfactory settlement of the issues with China, but has been willing to surrender her "unequal rights" in China as fast as conditions and the security of her nationals and their property seem to warrant. In the fourth place, with the temporary elimination of Russia as a great Imperialistic power and with the increased tension between Japan and the United States, the Anglo-Japanese treaty of mutual alliance no longer appeared either essential or desirable and was allowed to lapse in 1922.

The recent crisis between Japan and China is the direct outcome of the problems stated above, *i.e.*, Japan's special rights in China based on Treaties which were imposed by force, and the Chinese opposition to these rights and their continued attempts to end them and to force the Japanese to deal with China on terms of equality. The problem is complicated by the admittedly chaotic condition, social, economic and political, of China, and the practical impossibility of finding anyone or any group able to assume responsibility for law and order in all parts

of the country. Despite this, however, in view of the solemn obligations of both Japan and China, no attempt should have been made by either of those powers to enforce their own claims without first exploring the possibilities of the League of Nations and the other means for preserving peace. It is here that I take issue with Sir John Simon and with the other apologists of British policy, or rather lack of policy. For while I agree that one of the important functions of the League is to serve as a mediating agent in the quarrels between nations, its principal function, and the one which must be emphasised if it is to endure, is that of preventing wars from breaking out. To suggest that the League stands for mediation alone is to admit that we are still where we were in 1914, for it was possible even then to provide for mediation either before or after war had broken out. While to suggest that we must wait for all individuals and nations to achieve a change of heart, or even to realize that wars do not pay, is, in the light of the last war, flirting with national and international suicide. The defect in that pre-war society was the ease with which wars did break out, and the disastrous consequences attendant upon them.

One might as well suggest that the principal function of a fire department is to assess damages after a fire has occurred, or of a police department to decide who was in the wrong after a riot has broken out, as to agree with Sir John Simon and others of his opinion about the function of the League. If we are ever to achieve an international society in which the burden of armaments can be lightened and some guarantee of permanent peace achieved, it does seem essential that we provide some security against attack and some assurance that wars may

not be waged whenever any group of irresponsible militarists feel like experimenting with their latest toys.

It was into this field of international relations that the League of Nations brought a new idea and a new method. The idea may be summed up in the word "co-operation", and the method in "joint action", and if there be no co-operation among the members of the League to secure peace and no joint action after aggressive measures have been taken in defiance of covenants, then the League would seem to have failed in achieving its main purpose, and it is unlikely that any degree of confidence can be placed in it in the future. The tragic thing about this conclusion is, as Sir Arthur Salter says, "that if the League fails now there is little ground for confidence that it will ever succeed . . . . in what other instance is it likely that those who are concerned would have so strong an inducement to support the collective system. I find it difficult to believe that if the collective system now fails, any country will retain confidence that it will be effective in another serious issue and if our present system fails, we can hardly hope to build again at least in our generation, for we have nothing to build with if the confidence in the observance of engagements has been destroyed."

It may be objected that no war has occurred in the Far East and that the League has been largely responsible for preventing war, but this objection is on the whole "eye-wash", based on legal quibbling. For if the facts are examined it is evident that an "unofficial" war has been raging there as a result of which Japan has gained her immediate ends (the permanence and control of her interests) in Manchuria and shows little indication of any intention to give them up. Her success in breaking the anti-Japanese boycott by her attack on Shanghai (which

seems to have been the main reason for that attack) is less apparent, but this lack of success has not been due to any action on the part of the members of the League, of the United States or of Russia, but rather to the unexpected and dogged resistance of the Chinese soldiers. The League, the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact have been unable to prevent losses in that city that are estimated at $400,000,000, 180,000 homes damaged, 8,000 civilians killed, some 10,000 civilians missing, and very heavy combatant casualties.

Here it is interesting to consider the attitude and action of Great Britain, the United States, Russia, and the League, together with the consequences apparent or probable to all of them, including China and Japan, and all in terms of "enlightened self interest". Britain's policy has been one of keeping the British peace at all costs, and doing nothing that would injure British trade by antagonising either of the combatants. To this end she has shown a marked reluctance either to do anything of a positive nature herself or to co-operate with anyone else in doing anything, and her attitude can be pretty well summed up in Sir John Simon's "Peace and Trade", and in the Foreign Office Communiqué of January the ninth, in reply to the American proposals of a few days earlier:

Jan. 9/32.—It was announced that the Government had decided not to follow the example of the U.S. Government in addressing a note to China and Japan regarding Manchuria, and the Foreign Office issued a communiqué reading: "His Majesty's Government stand by the policy of the open door for international trade in Manchuria . . . . since the recent events the Japanese representatives at the Council of the League at Geneva stated on October 13th that Japan was the champion in Manchuria of the principle of equal opportunity and the open door for the economic activities of all nations. Further, on December 28th the Japanese Prime

Minister (since assassinated) stated that Japan would adhere to the open door policy, and would welcome participation and co-operation in Manchurian enterprise. In view of these statements H.M. Government have not considered it necessary to send any formal Note to the Japanese Government on the lines of the American Government's Note, but the Japanese Ambassador in London has been requested to obtain confirmation of these assurances from his Government."

The United States has shown throughout a good deal more concern than has Britain, and her readiness to co-operate with the League, in the light of the history of the past ten years, is remarkable. Failing to get positive action on the part of the League, Mr. Stimson has on two occasions clearly enunciated the American attitude; once in his Note of January 7th, to the governments of Japan and China, and again in the letter explanatory of this note which he wrote to Senator Borah, dated February 24th. The relevant sections of these are:

(*Note*). "The United States Government cannot admit the legality of any situation *de facto*, nor does it intend to recognise any treaty or agreement entered into between those governments or their agents which impairs the treaty rights of the United States or its citizens in China.

The United States Government does not intend to recognise any situation or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the covenants of the Pact of Paris of August 27th 1928, to which both Japan and China as well as the United States are parties." Jan. 7th, 1932. Mr. Stimson.

(*Letter*). "The Nine Power Treaty forms the legal basis upon which now rests the Open-Door policy toward China."

"At the time that this treaty was signed it was known that China was engaged in an attempt to develop the free institutions of a self-governing republic after her recent revolution from an autocratic form of government; that she would require many years of both economic and political effort to that end; and that her progress would necessarily be slow. The treaty was thus a covenant

of self denial among the signatory powers in deliberate renunciation of any policy of aggression which might tend to interfere with that development."

Remembering that Japan had hinted that this Treaty needed revision, Mr. Stimson went on:

"It must be remembered that this Treaty was one of several treaties and agreements entered into at the Washington Conference by the various Powers concerned, all of which were inter-related and interdependent. No one of these treaties can be disregarded without disturbing the general understanding and equilibrium which were intended to be accomplished and effected by the group of agreements arrived at in their entirety. The Washington Conference was essentially a disarmament conference aimed to promote the possibility of peace in the world, not only through the cessation of competition in naval armament but also by the solution of various other disturbing problems which threatened the peace of the world particularly in the Far East.

These problems were all inter-related. The willingness of the American Government to surrender its then commanding lead in battleship construction, and to leave its position at Guam and in the Philippines without further fortifications, was predicated upon, among other things, the self-denying covenants contained in the Nine Power Treaty, which assured the Nations of the world not only of an equal opportunity for their Eastern trade but also against the military aggrandisement of any Power at the expense of China. One cannot discuss the possibility of modifying or abrogating these provisions of the Nine Power Treaty without considering at the same time the other promises upon which they were really dependent."

The story of the part played by the League in the struggle is too long to tell here. The Council, the Assembly, or Committees of the Assembly, have been in almost constant session ever since the outbreak on the night of September 18th. The Commission appointed by the League, consisting of the Earl of Lytton of Great Britain, General Claudel of France, Herr Schnek of

Germany, Count Aldolrandini of Italy, and General Frank R. McCoy of the United States, to enquire into the whole situation are still in Manchuria carrying on their investigations, and there is still an opportunity for the League to redeem itself after the report of this commission is received. In the meantime, acting on the suggestion contained in Mr. Stimson's letter, the League has allied itself with the policy of the United States in the following terms:

> (The Assembly) "Declares it incumbent upon the Members of the League of Nations not to recognise any situation, treaty or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the Covenant of the League of Nations or to the Pact of Paris."
> Assembly Resolution of March 11th, 1932.

The policy of Russia throughout has been to avoid hostilities at all costs, for her leaders realize that a war with Japan would jeopardise the success of the communist experiment. While they would be reluctant to give up their interests in Manchuria and the Maritime Provinces of Siberia and are re-enforcing their troops there, it is probable that they would not risk any major engagements East of Lake Baikal.

In China the leaders of the Nationalist Government realized from the outset that they were in no condition or position to oppose Japan by armed strength, so they placed themselves completely in the hands of the League and the United States. This brought so few results that the Chinese soldiers themselves seem to have taken the matter in hand, failed to withdraw from Shanghai as arranged (or so it is suggested) and defended that city and its environments with great courage and great loss.

Japanese policy has been sometimes at cross purposes, due to the different attitudes of the civilian and military

sections of her Government, but in two matters there seems to have been fairly consistent agreement, one to seize and hold under some form of Japanese control the whole of Manchuria; the other, to cow and disorganize the Nationalist and radical groups in China proper by actual or threatened attacks on the vulnerable cities of China.

In the main, with the exception of China, all of the nations aforementioned have achieved their ends. But from these ends or from the methods adopted in achieving them have come dangers and consequences of a quite unexpected character.

In Japan the financial and economic situation, already serious, has grown worse, while the consequences of attempting to achieve her own ends by force, in place of using constitutional methods, is reflected in the fate of her premiers and great financiers. It is true that she has acquired Manchuria, but keeping it is another matter, for that involves trying to govern thirty millions of Chinese against their will and against the will of the hundreds of millions of Chinese in the adjoining provinces. It increases the probability of hostilities with Russia a hundredfold and is almost certain to lead to an increase in armaments by the United States.

The United States is so absorbed in its own domestic problems that no clear cut results of the crisis in the Far East are yet visible. However, it has brought home again to that country the futility and dangers of a policy of isolation, has caused her to co-operate to a surprising extent with the League of Nations, and, as suggested above, if Japan remains in Manchuria, is likely to increase American fears of her, with resulting increases in armaments.

The consequences to China have been destruction and chaos. The Nationalist Government is but a shadow of

its former self, the Kuomintang is in the pillory, and destructive communism and banditry are rampant, while hatred of Japan and distrust of the League and the Western Powers have increased accordingly.

Sir John Simon has preserved "the British Peace" but has left Great Britain and the British Dominions heirs to the practical certainty that on some other occasion when British security is more clearly involved, as it was in Belgium in 1914, Britain and the Dominions cannot look to the League of Nations, or to the promises or covenants of other nations to save her from attack or assist her if attacked. They (the League, etc.) apparently will have done their duty if they are prepared to mediate after the event. As for trade, despite the transitory fillip resulting from dropping gold and from the boycott of Japanese goods by the Chinese, it is certain that the destruction and chaos in China are not in the best interests of British trade.

Russia, as pointed out earlier, while alarmed, does not want to fight with Japan at present. But the loss of her railways and interests in Northern Manchuria would be a serious blow to her prestige as well as a menace to her farther Siberian provinces. While if war breaks out it will greatly delay her economic re-organization and may even wreck it altogether. For this reason there are some grounds for believing that there are elements in other countries that are not adverse to the outbreak of war between Japan and Russia, in the hope that it might destroy them both, thus removing a double menace and leaving the "spoils" of Manchuria and the Ukraine to the onlookers.

The part played by the League in the whole affair has been a difficult and far from successful one. Its constitution prevents it from being more than the expression

of the collective opinion and will of its members, and as we have seen the opinions and will of those members in a position to be effective, were opposed to action. A great deal of concern was expressed by the smaller powers and for that matter by outstanding individuals in all countries, but they were not in a position to act themselves or to force others to act. The result has been generally bad; the Great Powers have seen that the League will not prevent them from forcing their demands on others; the Small Powers realize that the League offers them no certain guarantee against attack; China has little, if any, faith left in it, while Japan has given its requests and suggestions the scantiest consideration when they did not coincide with her own desires.

And what of Canada and her position in regard to it? Most Canadians, despite the Great War, are still in a fog as to their position in, and responsibility for, international affairs; and this is reflected naturally enough in the attitude of our government. We are a small power and a member of the League, and we have for all intents and purposes no armaments, so naturally we are concerned in the success and failure of the League and its policy of pooled security. On the other hand we are members of the British Commonwealth, and must consider our own position in the light of that of the other Dominions, and particularly of Great Britain. As Britain decided to do nothing we followed her lead. At the same time it must be remembered that Vancouver is nearer Tokio than London, and Canada has immigration and race questions to face which do not concern Great Britain. Thus it is inevitable that the sentiment and policy of the United States toward Japan, and the failure of Great Britain to co-operate with her (the U.S.) in the Pacific, affect us, and may involve us in extremely difficult situations.

As for trade, the fall in the value of silver, the dislocation of government and industry in China, the boycott of Japan, and the new Japanese tariffs, are not likely to improve the possibilities for trade with the Orient in the near future.

It may be, of course, that the League method and the post-war philosophy and policy of co-operation and joint-action have been born out of time, and that there is no real desire to see them replace the untramelled action of states and governments in their dealings with one another. But if this be true, and the readiness of all governments to license the export of arms to both Japan and China at a time when they were professing great concern at the outbreak of hostilities suggests that it is, then it is unlikely, in view of the destructive character of the weapons with which science provides us, that we shall be given another chance of creating an international society.

LUCRETIUS

M. D. C. Tait

THE part which creative imagination and intuition play in framing scientific hypotheses when disciplined by a logical habit of mind, is strikingly illustrated in the views of some of the early Greek philosophers. For though they did not understand the method of empirical science, and had no mechanical aids, they adumbrated the two most fruitful hypotheses of modern science, evolution and the atomic structure of matter. In the latter case they did more than adumbrate the conception, they worked it out in detail. In the work of the Roman poet Lucretius the atomic view of nature was finally presented as a complete interpretation of the universe.

We have very little information about the life of Lucretius, and the significance of the little that we have is doubtful. He was born in 99 B.C. (or possibly 94) and died in 55 B.C. He lived, that is, in the stormy period of the Roman Republic when the struggle for control between armed political leaders robbed the free institutions of the city state, and the political life which centred in them, of all meaning for the majority of the citizens, who became the helpless spectators and often the victims of the struggle. The only safe, and often the only possible course was to withdraw from the political life of the community altogether, and seek interest and satisfaction in one's own private affairs. Of the details of Lucretius' life we have almost no record, except a notice in St. Jerome who says that he was driven mad by a love-philtre, wrote his poems in the lucid intervals of insanity and committed suicide. There may well be an element of truth in this tradition, made familiar by Tennyson's

poem, but when we remember its origin, the details are, to say the least, suspicious. A more suitable fate for an atheist and a more pointed warning to wavering believers could hardly be imagined.

The poem of Lucretius is, so far as we can judge, a faithful restatement of the doctrines of the Greek philosopher Epicurus who lived about two hundred and fifty years earlier, at a time in the history of Greece when political and social conditions there resembled those of the age of Lucretius in Rome in this respect, that they favoured an individualistic ideal of life. When the Greek city states lost their independence and fell under the control of Macedon, men gave up hope of achieving the ideal and common good which Plato and Aristotle taught it was the purpose of the state to realize, and centred their attention on a good which could be realized by the individual, if not in complete isolation from organized society, at least not in any close and vital connection with it. At the same time interest in the idealist systems of philosophy tended to give way to a greater interest in the physical world and a disposition to find an explanation for all problems in material terms. Moreover, a philosophy of life was needed for the plain man who had no interest in philosophical speculation, and was quite satisfied with the world which he could see and touch, the man who wanted to go about his own business and get as much satisfaction out of life as he could.

Curiously enough it was the obscure theory of the atomic structure of matter, proposed nearly two centuries earlier as a solution of the problems of change and permanence, which was revived by Epicurus to meet these social and intellectual conditions, and to supply the plain man's need of a guide to good living. Adopting the atomic theory, he made it the basis of a closely woven

system of knowledge and conduct whose fundamental principle was the validity and adequacy of sense perception. This was curious, as the reality of which the atomic theory told was in that age remote from sense perception. He insisted, however, that it is by the senses alone that we apprehend matter, which is the only reality. Their testimony is always true in what they directly reveal, and in any sphere beyond their direct reach, notably the nature of atoms themselves, it is still sense on which we must rely, proceeding by analogy and immediate inference from its direct evidence. The primary and obvious experience of sense perception, therefore, will reveal to us all we need to know. Nor do we need anything else to guide our conduct, for the senses inform us directly of the only difference between good and bad actions—the pleasure or pain that attends them. Moreover, we need only look about us to see that all men necessarily and always seek pleasure and avoid pain. To decide what is good and bad, then, we do not need to formulate an abstract ideal of human nature or concern ourselves with any obligation to realize it. We are concerned in ethics as in physics, not with what ought to be, but simply with what is, and the senses will give us correct information about the facts in both these spheres.

It was to be expected that a theory whose principles put so little strain on men's understanding and so little check on their impulses would meet with widespread approval. Many who never grasped the far from simple physical theory of atomism, and who had little taste for the particular pleasures recommended by Epicurus, were glad to avail themselves of what they took to be a philosophical justification of a life of indulgence, and professed themselves his followers. But Lucretius was not one of these. For him Epicurus was an inspired master whose

teaching in all its detail must be learned, believed and applied. He writes in fervour

> a god was he, a god,
> Who first found out that discipline of life
> Which now is called philosophy, and whose skill
> From such great billows and a gloom so dark
> Delivered life, and steered it into a calm
> So peaceful and beneath so quiet a light.[1]

The boon which Epicurus conferred on men was to free them from the bondage of religion. For Lucretius religion was simply the superstitious fear of the gods, and as such he believed it to be responsible for most of the suffering and cruelty of mankind. Religion, he thought, was the source of the great fears with which mankind is haunted and oppressed, and which ruin life, the fear of the gods and the fear of death. Both these fears are really groundless. Epicurus dispelled them and gave men freedom by proving that the world is wholly material. More explicitly this freedom is to be won by a grasp of two fundamental principles: first, that the law of cause and effect is supreme and operates universally, for "Nothing is ever by divine will begotten out of nothing";[2] and, second, that nothing exists but matter and space.[3] These two principles taken together leave no room for arbitrary or capricious action in any part of the universe. There are gods; we must believe in them because we have images of them in dreams; and everything has a cause. But the gods, like the rest of the universe, are material and they have no control over it. The assurance of the regularity and supremacy of natural law operating in a material universe provides the necessary conditions for living a good life. Lucretius, then, adopts materialism on the same grounds

[1]De Rerum Natura v. 8. [2]I. 50. [3]I. 418.

on which it is often repudiated, namely, its bearing on character and conduct. Let us look a little more closely at his view of the world and its implications for human life.

There is nothing in the universe but matter and space. Matter exists in the form of an infinite number of minute particles moving at tremendous speed in infinite space. Motion and weight are inherent properties of the atoms, and owing to their weight they have a natural movement downward. Lucretius' master did not understand the meaning of gravitation, but he anticipated Galileo in perceiving that in a vacuum all bodies irrespective of differences in weight fall at the same speed.[4] It would have been impossible to avoid the awkward conclusion that all atoms fall eternally in straight lines without meeting, impossible, that is, to account for the formation of worlds in space, if the atom were not endowed with another type of motion, in deviation from the straight line. Atoms swerve spontaneously and imperceptibly in their fall, and impinge on one another. Becoming entangled they begin to rotate, and draw more and more atoms into the vortex. In this way our world and an infinite number of worlds have been formed.

The doctrine of the swerve of the atom has often been derided as a childish inconsistency, a desperate last resort to get the world started, and, in another connection, to account for moral freedom. But it should be noticed that it received a negative corroboration in not being contradicted by the evidence of the senses, the Epicurean criterion of truth, and moreover it was positively grounded on a view of the nature and origin of physical law. The chief concern of Epicureanism was to free the physical world and human life from the external control both of

[4] II. 225.

the gods of mythology and the Fate of the Stoics. The doctrine of the swerve of the atom illustrates the Epicurean view that "in the beginning was the act". In a primordial state of chaos in which there is no vestige of order or organization there can, strictly speaking, be no directions and no relations. The motion of an atom in this state is therefore quite indeterminate. Any type of motion is possible for it. When it enters into relations with other atoms in a system its motion is limited by the laws of the system, but these laws are not external or antecedent to the formation of the cosmos; they are the controlling conditions which emerge as the atoms come into relation with one another. The cosmos generates its own laws, and therefore is, in a real sense, free. Hence comes the "power snatched from the fates",[5] which, as we shall see, was so important in Lucretian ethics.

Those who find this dialectical justification of the spontaneous movement of atoms unconvincing, may be interested to notice the curiously similar point of view of recent physical theory, in the Principle of Indeterminacy as formulated by Heisenberg. The reader scarcely needs to be reminded that the ancient approach to the subject was entirely different from the modern, and that the ancient view was neither suggested nor confirmed by experiment. But even allowing for these differences and all that they imply, the similarity is striking. Heisenberg's principle states that it is impossible to determine both the velocity and position of a particle. It is obvious that with this unknowable or unknown factor in the past and present it is impossible to consider the behaviour of the particle as so determined that it can be completely predicted. The classical laws of physics by which such prediction seemed possible are statistical: they apply only

[5]II. 257.

to mass. It would appear that for modern physics as for ancient Epicureanism, the action of the individual particle is in some respects spontaneous, or at any rate has possibilities not yet comprised in our known laws.

The atoms of Lucretius, unlike the atoms which modern science has revealed, are solid indestructible particles of the now obsolete "dead" matter, which cannot be reduced to anything smaller—hence the name atom, "what cannot be cut". They are so small as to be invisible, but Lucretius believes that their existence can be inferred from what the senses directly reveal to us about bodies which we do see, in such phenomena, for example, as evaporation and the attrition of rocks and metals. Atoms do not differ in kind from one another, but only in size and shape. Some are relatively large and heavy with jagged surfaces. Others are extremely minute, smooth and light. Though they are all alike in their hardness, they combine to form objects of greater and less density in proportion to the amount of empty space they enclose. And though they are all alike without colour, taste and smell, they form objects which have these secondary qualities, and so give rise to the variety and beauty of the world. Thus the ancient atomic theory in its intention illustrates the mathematical ideal of modern science, namely, that quality should be reduced to quantity, or, at least, be expressible in quantitative terms. The qualitative differences in objects spring partly from the different sizes, shapes and positions of the atoms which compose them, and partly from their motion. For again, anticipating in a remarkable way the view of modern physics, Lucretius held that even objects which appear static are really in violent motion.

From colourless atoms come "The golden race of peacocks steeped in smiling beauty"[6] and

> "The race of shells which paint the lap of earth
> Where with its gentle waves the sea beats
> On the thirsty sand of the winding shore."[7]

From atoms of different shapes and sizes comes the beauty of the Italian countryside, where——

> "glad vineyards cover hill and plain,
> While grey green boundary strips of olive trees
> Run between the fields stretching far out
> O'er hillock, valley and plain."[8]

In a windstorm it is because of the friction of atoms that in the tree-tops as they rub together the fire gathers like a swelling bud and they burst into the bloom of flame.[9] From particles of dead matter, too, life and sentience spring "as dry wood unfolds into flame".[10] *Natura daedala rerum*—nature the cunning craftsman of things, like the legendary artist Daedalus, makes "dead" matter live. One is not surprised to learn that it is in all probability to a passage[11] in Lucretius that Botticelli owed the conception of the "Primavera".

The process of birth and growth is nothing but the combination of atoms. Nature fixes unalterably the sizes and shapes of atoms which can unite to form any given species and which it can assimilate in its growth. She also fixes the "deep-set boundary mark" which is the limit of its growth. Thus she ensures the uniformity of the species and the mortality of every combination of atoms. Each thing lives and grows just so long as it is able to take into itself the atoms suitable to it and necessary for its sustenance, and to maintain its structure

[6]II. 503. [7]II. 374. [8]v. 1372. [9]I. 900. [10]II. 882. [11]v. 373.

intact under blows from outside. Once that point in its life and growth is past everything must break up and perish. This applies to the worlds as a whole and to everything in them.

"The gates of death are never closed
Against sky, sun or earth or the deep seas,
But they stand open awaiting them with huge
Vast gaping jaws."[12]

There is a constant struggle going on throughout the universe between the constructive forces of life and the disruptive forces of death. But at every stage and in all its aspects the struggle is under the unrelaxing control of law, which brings the ordered forms of life out of the chaotic mass of surging atoms, and which prevents the final victory at any stage of either combatant in the struggle. The worlds and everything in them come into being and perish, but in the process each individual atom and the sum of atoms are preserved unchanged. The source of life is infinite and eternal.

"The rain showers perish when the sky father
Has thrown them into the lap of mother earth;
But then bright crops spring up luxuriantly:
Boughs on the trees are green; the trees themselves
Grow and with fruit are laden: from this source
Moreover both our own race and the race
Of beasts are nourished: for this cause we see
Glad towns teeming with children, leafy woods
With young birds' voices singing on all sides. . . .
None therefore of those things that seem to perish
Utterly perishes, since nature forms
One thing out of another, and permits
Nothing to be begotten unless first
She has been recruited by another's death."[13]

[12]v. 737. [13]I. 250.

Knowledge of the conservation of matter becomes for Lucretius an almost mystical feeling of the eternity of life working through death and triumphant over it. Things die, but in dying "like runners they pass on the torch of life."[14] In his world of atoms and void and mechanical law there is no "presence" for Lucretius as there is for Wordsworth, no spirit that is "far more deeply interfused". But he has something of the same feeling, amounting almost to reverence, for the life of his material world that Wordsworth has for the world which to him is the expression of spirit. This consciousness of the mysterious though quite material life of the universe, with the intense longing that men's thoughts and actions should be brought into harmony with its operation is the one romantic element in an otherwise severely realistic poem. And it is mainly because of it that, though the gods, too, are made of atoms and dwell in the lucid interspace of world and world where they have no interest in events or control over them, Lucretius begins his poem with the magnificent invocation to Venus the goddess of life, and prays that she will not permit Mars, the god of war and death, to destroy the Roman state.

Lucretius' description of the atoms and their combinations in the things of the world leads up to his account of the nature of the soul and the proof of its mortality. The soul is of one nature with the body, like it material through and through. It, too, is composed of atoms—the smoothest, lightest atoms of "wind, air and fire", and of an unnamed fourth nature. The soul atoms in themselves are of course neither sentient nor conscious; they, too, are particles of "dead" matter. But when they are combined to form a soul and move together, perception and consciousness arise. The cause of sensation is

[14]II. 79.

ascribed to the stream of particles continually given off by objects and borne in upon our sense-organs, an explanation which is only partly true and need not be elaborated, though it is of some interest to note that it was still supported in the seventeenth century and has left an echo in the words *effluvia*, *influence* and the like.

As the soul is simply a combination of atoms, it is evident that like every other body it comes into being and perishes. Indeed, more than any other body it is exposed to the forces of death. For its smooth and extremely subtle atoms cannot of themselves cohere even for a moment. It is only because the soul atoms are enclosed within the more compact mass of the body that they are kept together at all and so perform the motions in which life and consciousness consist. It follows that when the structure of the body breaks down the atoms which came together to form the soul must escape and be dispersed through space again. In the dispersion, since the indvidual atoms are not conscious, all consciousness is lost. The soul does not pass out of the body to meet a dubious fate, but when

> "A few particles of heat
> Have been dispersed and through the mouth some air
> Has been forced out,"[15]

the soul as a living conscious entity ceases to exist. It is possible that in infinite time the same atoms which united to make a man and scattered at his death will meet again. But if they did he would not realize it, for the stream of consciousness is stopped

> "When once immortal death hath taken away
> Mortal life."[16]

These, then, Lucretius thinks, are the facts about the

[15]III. 121. [16]III. 869.

universe and human life which a man must face. He is nothing but atoms and void and he lives in a world of atoms and void. The world was not made nor is it controlled by the gods. It is not the expression of intelligence working to realize a purpose, benevolent or otherwise. It was formed and is regulated by mechanical law which operates blindly and without any special reference to man's nature, his needs and desires. Nature brings together the atoms which make up his being "from yon twelve-winded sky", kindles life and sentience in them, so that he can see the beauty of the world, recognize the worth of human character, feel friendship and love. Then she destroys him utterly. An excellent excuse this to many for recrimination or at least for a little yearning and dropping a few tears. But not to Lucretius. After piling up proofs, twenty-eight of them, one after another, that the soul is mortal, he breaks out into a song of triumph on its mortality.

> "Death then is nothing to us, nor one jot
> Does it concern us since the nature of mind
> Is thus proved mortal."[17]

It is quite true that a time will come when it will be said of every man

> "Now no more shall thy home nor thy good wife
> Receive thee in gladness, nor shall sweet children
> Run forth to meet thee and snatch kisses from thee
> Touching thy heart with silent joy."[18]

But Lucretius does not forget his materialism nor does his realism fail him. Not only like Housman does he look at the fact of death without sentimentality, but even, unlike Housman, without wincing or regret. He is perfectly

[17]III. 830. [18]III. 89.

matter of fact. One day strips a man of all life's benefits, but he will no longer need or want them. His life and consciousness will have ceased, and it would be absurd to waste sympathy on atoms flying through space.

Moreover, life is, or may be, very good while it lasts, and the fact that it stops does not make it bad. It is precisely because nature puts out his life that man is freed from the two greatest evils of life, fear of the gods and fear of death, and so has a chance to achieve his proper good. Lucretius, unlike Bertrand Russell, does not feel the tragedy of man striving to realize and express in his life the values of beauty, goodness and truth in the face of a universe in which these values are not constituent elements, and which seems hostile to their development. Pessimism implies the notion of a meaning and purpose frustrated, an ideal whose realization is always thwarted. Lucretius, judged by this criterion, is not a pessimist. It is possible, he thinks, for every man to secure the good of which his nature is capable. In his ethics he tries to maintain a consistently materialistic point of view. Man is made of atoms, his perceptions, feelings, desires and thoughts consist simply in atomic motions. His good therefore cannot be an ideal good divorced from his material nature. It must itself consist in atomic movement and its effects, and its nature must be immediately evident to the senses. These tell us that pleasure is always good and pain is always bad. If a man therefore is to secure the maximum good, he will choose what causes a pleasurable motion and avoid what causes a painful motion of the atoms of his being. In spite of his mechanistic psychology, Lucretius will not accept the determinism in ethics which was its logical counterpart. The doctrine of the spontaneous swerve of the atoms which explained the formation of worlds in space, is the ground and

materialistic explanation of that moral freedom of which we are directly conscious in choice. Because the atoms in his soul can move spontaneously, a man need not react to any and every stimulus. He can control his response to the images in his soul as they set up the motions of desire, and refuse to attend to them. Since by combining images he can recall the past and picture the future, he must regulate his life so as to secure the maximum of pleasure on the whole. This cannot be done by satisfying any and every desire as it arises, for in most cases the pain of the antecedent desire outweighs the pleasure of satisfaction. A certain amount of this pain-pleasure is inevitable in satisfying the necessary desires of the body, but if a man would live a happy life he must free himself from all unnecessary desires for wealth, fame and power. These are clamorous and insatiable, and in the pain of the fruitless effort to satisfy them men suffer all the tortures with which superstition has made the next world terrible.

> "Thus does the life of fools
> Become at last an Acheron here on earth."[19]

The blessed life of pleasure and tranquillity for Lucretius is therefore very different from the swinish incontinent thing popularly associated with the term "epicurean". On the contrary it is characterized by the utmost restraint and simplicity. Though its motive is entirely self-regarding, and its end a physical condition of the individual, it issues in actions which, seen at least from the outside, are not different from those which a man would perform acting from a sense of obligation, and in order to realize an ideal and a general good.

Nor is the Lucretian ideal of tranquillity merely

[19] III. 1023.

negative—the freedom from desire. It consists in the active enjoyment of the simple pleasures of bodily health and human relationships. Above all it consists in the pleasures which the mind enjoys in its freedom from the painful atomic movements of fear and in the actively pleasurable atomic movements of its thought. In philosophy, in the contemplation of all time and all existence, the mind finds its specific pleasure. In philosophy man lives a life worthy of the gods which, like the life of Epicurus, is an approximation to the divine tranquillity. It is not true piety

> "To be seen often with veiled head
> To turn toward a stone, visiting every altar."

nor to tremble before some imaginary power

> "When we lift our eyes to the celestial
> Temples of the great universe, and the aether
> Studded with glittering stars, and contemplate
> The paths of sun and moon."

> "This rather is piety, to have power
> To survey all things with a tranquil mind."[20]

Much of Lucretius' physics and psychology is wrong, ridiculous even, in comparison with modern doctrines. His theory of knowledge and ethics are full of difficulties, and break down at crucial points. We may doubt whether his materialistic interpretation of the facts of life is the final verdict of science, and even if it were, we may still ask whether it is science alone which is competent to speak. But his determination to push natural explanations as far as possible, and his battle against superstition, are the conditions of all progress in knowledge, and have permanent value. While insisting that man must adapt

[20] v. 1198.

his life to the world of blind force in which he finds himself, he will not accept the principle of force as a guide for life, and his outlook on life is free from cynicism. This must command our respect no less than his courage and his noble ideal of tranquillity.

We should naturally expect that the spirit of the man and the tone of his work would reflect the serenity of this ideal and this dispassionate attitude toward the facts of life. But there is a sharp contrast between his teaching and his own spirit and character. It is probably an accident due to its unfinished condition that a poem which opens on the calm note of pleasure, Venus the life-giver, joy of men and gods, ends with a description of the plague at Athens, which, in its poignancy and the unsparing realism of the details of suffering, vies with the account in Thucydides on which it is based, and Boccaccio's account of the plague at Florence in the opening pages of the Decameron. But it is not an accident that, in spite of his feeling for the triumphant life of the universe, he imagines the horrible details of death so vividly, and dwells in an almost morbid way on the destruction of the world. Nor is it an accident that in a poem whose key-note is pleasure, the fact of human suffering should be so prominent. Internal evidence bears out to some extent the tradition that Lucretius wrote the poem in the lucid intervals of insanity. Be that as it may, certainly he preaches tranquillity with a vehemence that shows only too plainly how far from tranquil was his own state of mind. His attack on the passion of love may itself be the origin of the tradition that he was driven mad by a love philtre, but its violence and bitterness stamp it unmistakably as the expression of his own acute suffering. The same clear view of fact which will not allow him to

pity men because they must die, makes him disturbingly aware of their suffering and folly while they live.

But it is just because his passionate nature is out of harmony with the spirit of his teaching that he has the quick sympathy and vivid imagination to make poetry out of the Epicurean philosophy. Epicurus may have been a tranquil god, but he wrote appallingly dull prose. Lucretius was a turbulent human being, possibly a little mad, but he is one of the great poets of all literature. For the *De Rerum Natura* is not simply a scientific treatise with a moral, written in metrical form. Nor is its poetry incidental, scattered here and there among scientific arguments to make them more attractive. If this were all, if we felt that poetic touches were put on here and there from the outside, we should, I think, have to admit that, because of the many long passages which do not differ, except for the metre, from clear, precise prose, Lucretius has not succeeded in achieving the effect of poetry. Not, of course, simply because there are less inspired passages in the poem. It is not possible or desirable in a long poem that a lyrical pitch should be sustained throughout. Nor is there any reason why the content of science and philosophy should not become the subject matter of poetry. Poetry is not limited in its subjects, and in any case the Epicurean conception of the universe was ready matter for the poetic imagination to inform. But it is Lucretius' method which is so essentially unpoetic, the method of demonstration. He defines his terms, lays down principles, illustrates and proves them, passes on to a new point, proving what he says at each step, and refuting the views of other philosophers. It seems very far from the method and spirit of poetry.

A distinctive feature indeed, of the demonstration is the use of analogy which gives full play to his remarkable

powers of observation and description. But a series of brilliant pictures would not in themselves work the necessary transformation. What does work it is Lucretius' attitude and relation to his subject, which enable him in very large measure to clear the hurdle of his method. Though, like a philosopher or scientist, he builds up a system by the process of discursive thought, unlike these, he does not stand back and look at the system objectively, dispassionately. He is the poet whose imagination is kindled by what he sees, and who makes it new. The philosopher and scientist may well resent the implication that they have nothing of the creative artist in them, and repudiate this slur on their mental processes, which are by no means utterly pedestrian. It would be truer to say that the flash of imagination which in philosophy and science results in the creation of a new hypothesis, is sustained by Lucretius in his relation to the details of the system, and to the system as a whole which is built on the hypothesis. The result is that he does not only think about the world and human life, he senses it all with the immediacy of feeling. The barrier between subject and object is broken down, and he becomes for the moment what he sees and feels. This, no doubt, is typical of the experience of every great creative artist, and indeed of all who can appreciate and respond to the artist's expression. But for Lucretius this experience was unusually complete, both in regard to the details of his system and its import and meaning as a whole. Hence the clarity and definiteness of his imagination, and the force of his compressed, lucid style. There is no yearning to reach something vaguely felt but just out of reach. Nothing is worked up or teased. His ideas and images are too well formed for his expression of them to be sentimental, fanciful or misty, to be anything, indeed, but in a startling and revealing

way true. In his verse the great cosmic processes have an austere grandeur which is their very own, and the detail of nature has the exquisite precision of the natural forms in a painting of Leonardo da Vinci. Lucretius so identifies himself with his world that his poetry becomes the poetry of nature herself; and for us, as we read, as for him, it is nature who "calls aloud and shines clear".[21]

This clarity of imagination is, of course, also the source of his sympathy for life in all its forms, and his vivid realization of its meaning. Reflection on the nature and meaning of life, when it takes the form of a flash of intuition, may well be the fullest and most intense expression of life itself. The acme of life, as has well been said, is to understand life. It is because Lucretius' understanding of life was itself such a vital experience that his re-statement of the philosophy of Epicurus has the reality and the poetry of a new creation.

[21]II. 1050. (Most of the verse translations quoted in this article are taken from R. C. Trevelyan's *Translations from Lucretius*, London, 1920).

A REVERIE ON A DOG

E. J. Pratt

WE know the symptoms well: that sudden stitch,
We call it, in the side, and the cold rheum
That fills the corners of the eyes; the twitch
Of nerves, and those hot spasms that consume
The strength which would endure the duller pains
In creaking joints and knotted sinews. Time
Accounts for it, pouring his chilling rime,
Instead of blood, through arteries and veins
And hardening up the walls. It's just old age,
Plying her tendon needles through and through,
That knits the tangles in the cartilage.
Easy to see why she should come to men
Under the stress of three score years and ten,
But why to dogs and least of all to you.

To-night it's hard for me to understand
You are the same great fellow that I knew,
As free-born to the sea as to the land.
There is the same wide forehead; the same wise
Reflection in your brown and tolerant eyes;
The deep curl lustre of your shaggy coat;
The massive jet circumference of your throat;
Your heave of shoulders, length of back—but these,
Reminders of your prime, may not disguise
That in the effort of that laboured thump
Your tail declared lumbago in the rump;
Nor make me disbelieve how ill at ease
You feel placing your head upon my knees,
For when I spoke your name, your forelegs told
As plain as speech itself that you were old.

A REVERIE ON A DOG

Not years—but fifteen weeks—it seems to be:
The span of a canine biography.
We had you as a pup, a ball of fur,
Without a bone in your anatomy.
No leopard's cub was ever livelier.
I do not know the kind of lubrication that
Was rendered to your gristle from your fat.
You tied yourself in skeins and then untied,
Or with your teeth into a stick you hung,
Like a blood-leech to a swimmer, as we swung
You over water from a schooner's side.
A whistle acted like a hidden spring,
Releasing inward levers, wheels and traps;
Your leaps were antics of a crazy thing,
Your barks—a series of percussion caps.

And you were brought up somewhat like a child:
We teased and petted you and leathered you,
We sent you to your kennel, tethered you,
And put you on short rations for your wild
And freakish ways; and often did we turn
You with a broomstick out of doors
To howl the livelong night that you might learn
To have respect for kitchen mats and floors.
You don't forget the evening when you kept
Your vigil waiting till the household slept,
Slunk up the stairs, entered the attic, stole
Into a cupboard, and began to chew
The life out of a silver-buckled shoe.
You caught it like a muskrat without warning;
You tore the clasp and uppers from the sole,
And then slept on the carnage till the morning,
When Aunt Marie with her keen tongue and keener
Strap, sauntered in, and with a master-stroke

That caught you flush upon the quarters, woke
Your conscience to its first high misdemeanour.

But when you grew to adult strength and size
We thought it most absurd to scandalize
Your judgment with such capers as debase
The minds of other dogs about the place.
What greater training nonsense can be known
Than this—to whistle for a dog full-grown,
Especially if old and adipose,
And bid him stand upon his two hind legs,
Silent with forepaws drooping as he begs
A lump of sugar placed upon his nose,
While someone counted up to five or six;
Or dress him up in scarlet coat and pants,
And make him balance on one leg or dance
As if he were a monkey: now, these tricks
Might well pertain to Poms or Pekinese
And other breeds of sofa pedigrees,
But not to you who scorning a command,
The circus gesture of a whip or hand,
But just for fun, would never hesitate
To make a clear leap at a five-foot gate,
Jump from the bowsprit to the sea or take
A two-mile morning swim across a lake;
Or—what we thought the merriest sport of all—
To fight your way out to the last high wall
Of breakers, place your fine retrieving grip
On anything we flung—a rope or chip;
And what a sight as you emerged and laid
It at our feet! and how the rainbows played
Above the rising showers as you tried
To drown us with salt water from your hide!

A REVERIE ON A DOG

You never fought with smaller dogs: your pride
Regarded wrangling as undignified.
But once when a half-bred conceited pup,
A dachsund or a poodle, broke your nap
One afternoon with his infernal yap;
When for a solid hour he kept it up,
Presuming on your patience—then we saw
You lose your temper. Not being worth a bite,
Much less the honour of a serious fight,
He took a blow from your contemptuous paw
Which drove him deep into a snowdrift where
You held him without benefit of air,
Until, at length released, he scrambled out
With what was left to him of wind and limb,
And disappeared in one vertiginous rout
As if the devil himself were after him.

Now in the course of years it came to pass
This little strip of shoreline grew to fame,
Merely as habitation for your name,
When a grand kennel of the ribbon class,
Whose carriage of the head and vertebrae
Announced but one—your own—paternity,
Delivered to the world a score of males—
Those champions that crashed the fairs, and made
Competitors from other nations fade
Into a group of sorry draggle-tails.
So in these less known parts your blood prevails
Over the mix of anonymity,
For no one here may question dogs whose sires
First drew from such a regal pedigree
To fortify their biologic fires.

And other habits that were bred within
Required no hand of mine to discipline;
Indeed our human sense lagged far behind
The deep uncanny wisdom of your kind.
Call it a second sight or just plain scent,
A calculation or presentiment,
You never were, as we have been, storm-blind,
Nor felt our herded judgment when with head
Bent down we followed hard where no one led,
Circling upon our tracks with that arrest
Of will when east was north and north was west,
And when the winds lied in their throats to tell
Us it was night before the evening fell.
The way you hit direction was our wonder:
Like a Saint Bernard you could find your man
And dig him out; or with the roads snowed under,
Go out into the bush and fetch a span
Of horses home. Blindfolded you could tell
The folk from one another by their smell,
Identify the owner by a sniff
At a shoelace or a mitt, and when your tail
Began to wag, we knew it without fail,
That racing down the wind our herring skiff
Was making for the cove—before an eye
Could spot it from the fleet, or could descry
The cut of jib or colour of the sail.

How did it happen, too, that in default
Of words you had a language all your own
With many a modulation, many a tone?
How much of tameless fury for assault
Was held in the potential of your growl
Awakened by a distant timber howl?
Your notes ran the full gamut from a roar

That fell only below the leonine
Down to the soft insistence of a whine
That begged admittance at the kitchen door.
And, in between, varieties of bark
Expressive of annoyance or delight,
With those domestic gutturals that mark
A mutual recognition and a fight.

But this I know, however much I tried
To give the tongue canine its shadings, yet
The vocal meaning would be poor beside
The drama of your silent alphabet.
Here was the cipher in epitome
Of all our human moods from "A" to "Z(ed)".
In your cocked ears and gently tilted head
Attention had its perfect simile.
What disciplined submission as you tried
To feign indifference though your dilated
Nostrils, sniffing the oven air, belied
The patience in your haunches as you waited:
And what oblivion when you lay curled
Upon the flagstone in the summer shade;
What drowsy misconception of a world
Where stores are always full and bad debts paid!
But tongue and ear and eye and nostril fail
To measure the expression of the tail.
For every curve and angle known to science
Lay in its lines—the one that stiffly barred
A tramp's suspicious entrance to the yard
Looked like a level ramrod of defiance:
Only one cause could make it deadlier straight—
We saw it on occasion when you stood
Sniffing the wolf within the husky blood,
When the grey fellow came too near the gate.

And then that most abject configuration,
The tail between the legs, which means disgrace
To other dogs I know, but in your case

The final symbol for complete damnation.
That day—now let me recollect—I've long
Forgotten the real nature of the deed,
Some piece of mischief rather than a wrong
Done with intent I'll readily concede.
But like a fool I hurled at you a word
Hard as a granite fragment for it stirred
The self-respect within your own dog soul;
It made you slink away without a sound,
With lowered flanks and head close to the ground,
As though you searched for the last burial hole.
And when I saw the way your tail became
The figure of your mood, I had no doubt
That even Adam when he was cast out
Knew not such deep contrition in his shame.

But I shall not attempt to picture all
The many joyous movements when it curved
In gentle oscillation at a call,
Up to those lashing lateral sweeps reserved
For high ecstatic moments when the ship
Came into harbour from a five-months' trip:
For joining in our welcome to the crew
Your tail outdid your bark in the halloo,
For as it thudded on your sides, the slam
Had power enough to flatten out a ram.
Hanged be the man who first tried to defame
An instrument of speech so eloquent
As this—by dubbing it with such a name
That from the dawn of monkeys it has meant

A carry-over fussing at the end.
For I am sure that when you greet a friend,
It is the tail itself that wags the dog,
And not a vulgar spinal epilogue.

Enough of this—I must reform my ways,
And speak of acts which seven years ago
Broke in upon the passage of our days,
Doings of yours which stirred the village so,
When from the wharf we watched you wondering
What caused your frantic movements to and fro
Behind the five young swimmers, shepherding
Their strange and headlong struggle to the beach:—
The way in which you cris-crossed on your track,
Snapping at something that you could not reach,
Dived and came up, swam forward and swam back,
But ever at the youngsters' plunging feet;
Till someone pointed out, in full retreat,
A fin shaped like a cutlass, and we knew
That underneath the furrow was a blue
Torpedo shark making its baffled way
Back to the deeper waters of the bay.
Do you remember, too, your own wild fear
You would not reach the children at their play
Through the high palings of the field, the day
You managed with that mighty spring to clear
The fence, made for the charging Hereford, caught
Him by the muzzle with four fangs, held on
And worried him until his wind was gone—
When, with his nostrils clogged with blood, you brought
Him to his knees. And many another deed
There was of this like scale which would have won
A barrow full of stars, had it been done
By men, but being natural to your breed

The acts have slipped your knowledge and concern;
For who upon this troubled earth could earn
Such wages for such service measureless
And yet demand so little in return—
A caribou-bone of marrow for your share
At supper; a soft word, or the caress
Of a child's arms and the great debt was square.
And there were other days of bitterness
Whose salt was like the sea, but where no less
Your royal kinship with our hearts was shown—
The failures where the will was strong to save,
As on that winter night you took that brave
Dive through the ice-crack, but came up alone;
No pulse next day beat slower than your own
At the enigma of the open grave.

So here you are, your head upon my knees;
Your joints are stiff, your blood is running cold;
How strange it is, in all these fantasies,
I had forgotten that you had grown old.
Old . . . Well! Here is your last great bond with men,
This year will seal it fast, or perhaps another;
Your fifteen years is our three score and ten;
Give me the paw, old chap—and now, the other.

BENGOUGH AND CARLYLE

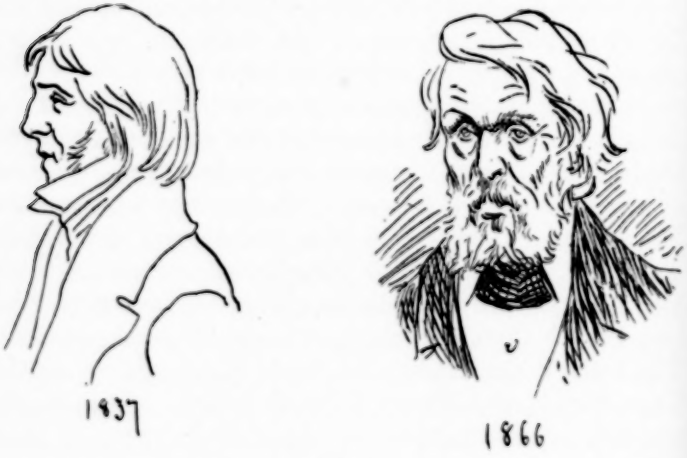
D. R. Keys

"ONLY as the gaseous-chaotic Appendix to that aqueous-chaotic Volume can the contents of the Six Bags hover round us, and portions thereof be incorporated with our delineation of it". *Sartor*, Bk. I, Ch. XI.

Canada has been called the Scotland of North America. Its geographical position in the northern half of the continent, with the great English-speaking republic to the south of it, would suggest the comparison. Historical facts bear it out. For more than two hundred years the Hudson's Bay Company has drawn its factors mainly from Scotland, so that even before Quebec was captured by Wolfe and his Highlanders "that true North" already had a Scottish infusion in its population. Many of those Highlanders settled in Quebec and intermarrying with the French *habitants* increased the Scottish element. The Selkirk settlement, the Gaels of Glengarry and of Cape Breton and Prince Edward Islands added to the number. And the climax is capped by Nova Scotia with its traditions of Scottish knighthood and its claims on a foothold in Edinburgh Castle. Moreover, partly from loyalty to the British crown, partly from their well-known clannishness, the Scotch when emigrating to America, seem to have preferred Canada to the United States.

Another analogy may be found in the frequency with which Canadians, like Scots, seek a larger career for their talents in the richer and more populous country to the south. Nor is there any lack of successes to parallel the achievements of Tait and Thomson, of Caird and Carlyle

in England. Witness the careers of Bishops Anderson of Chicago, Breen of Buffalo, and Acheson of Connecticut, of President Schurman of Cornell and Dean Schofield of Harvard as well as those of Sir William Osler and Dr. H. H. Plaskett, who after holding chairs in Johns Hopkins and Harvard were called to the Regius professorship of Medicine and the Savilian chair of Astronomy in the University of Oxford. And of what the Scots have done in Canada volumes have been written.



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Carlyle himself had at one time, not long after the publication of *Sartor*, the idea of emigrating to Canada. We find him writing to his brother Alexander from Chelsea, March 5, 1837, "Nay, in America itself, I will still trust to see you; and what is more, under better circumstances than our wont was. . .My Mother, too, may perhaps go to America, and the whole set of us root and branch! Far older emigrants than she have gone." A few years later after "Alick" himself had emigrated and

set up his "bield" near Brantford, Carlyle wrote to him, "Consider yourself the harbinger and pioneer of the others, not as one cut off from them. . .I hope yet to see you in Canada one day and sit by your hearth on ground that belongs to yourself and the Maker alone."

This hope was never fulfilled but the Canadian branches of the family have done good work in art, literature and science. James Carlyle, the father of Thomas, had two families, having been twice married. The author of *Sartor Resartus* belonged to the second family and it was to his younger brother Aleck that Thomas wrote as quoted above.

Curiously enough there was a John in each of the families. Dr. John Carlyle, the translator of Dante's *Inferno*, whose name appears so often in the Carlyle correspondence and to whom Thomas was so generous, was his full brother but seems to have been no great favourite of Jane Welsh Carlyle. The other John, the half brother, went out to Canada and settled near Woodstock, where one of his sons became a Public School Inspector. This son William had a daughter Florence, whose art work appealed to the Princess Louise when she was founding a Royal Society and an Academy of Art in Ottawa. Miss Carlyle was made a member of the Academy and afterwards won recognition for her paintings in the ateliers and salons of Paris. Her brother William A. Carlyle graduated at McGill in 1887 with the B.A.A.S. gold medal in Mining Engineering and after a short stay there in the Chair of Mining was appointed Mineralogist for British Columbia.

A more recent scion of the younger branch, John Aitken Carlyle, is an honour graduate of the University of Toronto (1908) and teacher of history in Harbord Collegiate Institute. His uncle Alexander Carlyle took

his degree in Toronto in 1870 with honours in the Department of Natural Science, became Professor of Chemistry in Albert College, Belleville, and acted as examiner in the University of Toronto in 1877 in the subjects of mineralogy and geology. It is significant to find these nephews taking professorial positions in a subject which had such interest for their distinguished uncle, as appears constantly in his correspondence.

Alexander Carlyle returned to Scotland and in 1879 married his cousin, Miss Mary Aitken, who had been living with Thomas Carlyle since his wife's death. In the *New Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, edited by his nephew Alexander and published by Lane, 1904, there is a portrait of Miss Aitken, sitting with Thomas and his brother the doctor and Mr. P. Swan, "one of the most honest-hearted simple and genuinely kind of men." The portrait faces page 250 of the second volume and Thomas' characterization of Mr. Swan, his host at Kirkcaldy, is on page 308.

After the marriage they went on living with the uncle till his death in 1881. Thomas Carlyle left his voluminous mass of letters to Mrs. Alexander Carlyle and after Froude's use of them and the ensuing controversy there was a second publication by Charles Eliot Norton assisted by Mrs. Carlyle and a further series edited and annotated by Alexander Carlyle after his wife's death. It was on his work on his uncle's biography that he took his M.A. degree from the University of Toronto in 1905.

In 1901 Alexander Carlyle had remarried in Canada, taking as his wife Miss Lilian McVicar, the younger sister of the wives of his elder brothers Thomas and Oliver. There have been several notable cases of men coming to Canada to marry their deceased wife's sister but we do not know of another case where a man came to Canada to marry his brothers' sister-in-law. He died on Nov-

ember 30, 1931, and the following extract from the London *Observer* has a special interest in connection with the subject of this article. "He was indeed a generous and discriminating distributor of Carlyle's treasures. One of these was the copy of the rare *Sartor* reprinted from the type of Frazer's Magazine, with the author's characteristic inscription to his wife:

To Jane Welsh Carlyle

'This little book, little milestone in a desolate, confused, yet not (as we hope) unblessed Pilgrimage we make in common, is with heart's gratitude inscribed by her affectionate

T. C.

London, 2d March, 1836'."

By a curious coincidence another rare copy, indeed a wholly unique copy of the *Sartor*, was recently discovered among the books of the late John Wilson Bengough, the founder of *Grip*, the Canadian *Punch*, who was hailed by the New York *Herald* as "the greatest cartoonist living on this side of the continent."

An Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy from its foundation by the Marquis of Lorne, in 1880; an ardent student of Shakespeare, Dickens and Carlyle, J. W. Bengough was also a strong liberal in politics and in the words of Dr. Withrow, "always on the right side of every moral question." Like that other great humorist Stephen Leacock, Bengough had toured Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand as a lecturer on economic and political topics and contributing to the gaiety of mankind by his popular "chalk-talks".

Six and sixty years ago in *Our Young Folks*, a Boston monthly for young readers, there appeared an article on "The Two Knights who fought the Giant Sham", Sir

William Makepeace Thackeray and Sir John Leach. Both these artists were among the early contributors to *Punch* and they were indeed leagued together in the attack on that age of shams. But when Bengough, the Canadian Leach, illustrated *Sartor*, in an edition that appeared after Carlyle's death, the alliance had in it an element of the

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transcendental that seemed peculiarly appropriate to the character of the book. Henry Larkin, who did so much to help Carlyle during his closing years, has written a very elaborate exposition of the secret of Carlyle's life, based on a study of his works. Of *Sartor* he says: "It is undoubtedly the most brilliantly suggestive of his books and contains the intellectual germs of all that he afterwards grew to. It is the seed plot of the future harvest

of his life. But essentially it is an importation from Germany; a wonderfully successful attempt to embody in a practically suggestive form for the use of English readers the entire German transcendental literature."

And again, "Thus all visible or imaginable appearances are regarded as the covering or symbolic clothing of whatever reality may be hidden within them. It was this grand and pregnant thought which suggested to Carlyle his quaint notion of the philosophy of clothes which *Sartor Resartus* (the Tailor retailored, or German philosophy with a new application) professes to elucidate."

Professor Archibald McMechan of Dalhousie in his excellent edition of *Sartor* gives a simpler and more acceptable theory for the origin of the book. 'The germ idea, as has often been pointed out, is contained in the *Tale of a Tub.* That Carlyle knew Swift familiarly is indisputable. To his College friends he was known as "Jonathan" and "the Dean" as much from his known liking for Swift's writings as his natural satiric bent. . . To put the matter beyond the shadow of a doubt Carlyle himself refers in *Sartor* to Swift and the passage quoted below.

"The worshippers of this deity had also a system of their belief, which seemed to turn upon the following fundamentals. They held the universe to be a large suit of clothes, which invests everything; that the earth is invested by the air; the air is invested by the stars; and the stars are invested by the *primum mobile.* Look on this globe of earth, you will find it to be a very complete and fashionable dress. What is that which some call land but a fine coat faced with green? or the sea but a waistcoat of water tabby? Proceed to the particular works of the creation, you will find how curious journey-

man Nature has been to trim up the vegetable beaux; observe how sparkish a periwig adorns the head of a beech, and what a fine doublet of white satin is worn by the birch. To conclude from all, what is man himself, but a microcoat or rather a complete suit of clothes with all its trimmings? As to his body there can be no dispute; but examine even the acquirements of his mind, you will find them all contribute in their order towards furnishing out an exact dress: to instance no more; is not religion a cloak, honesty a pair of shoes worn out in the dirt, self-love a surtout, vanity a shirt, and conscience a pair of breeches?"

'Here undoubtedly is the seed thought which lay chance-sown so long in Carlyle's mind that he had forgotten its existence and when it sprang up and bore fruit a hundredfold, imagined it to be some spontaneous, self-derived tilth. While this is admitted there is between the passage in Swift and the completed *Sartor* all the difference between the bushel of seed-corn and the bursting garner.'

In this connection there is an interesting passage in Carlyle's Journal for January, 1832. "Franklin defines man as a Tool-making animal. Teufelsdröckh has therefore so far been anticipated. *Vivant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt.*"

Mr. Bengough's copy is one of the Routledge edition, London, 1888. It is supplied by him with marginal notes, serving as a guide to the paragraph structure, and comments on the text. This is carried through the whole book and gives evidence of the care with which the annotator studied Carlyle's work.

At Mr. Bengough's Memorial Service, November 22, 1923, Mr. A. E. S. Smythe, editor of the Hamilton *Herald*, called him the "Canadian Dickens", one of Walt Whit-

man's "great companions" with an instinct for human brotherhood and a friendship for the world at large, that accounted for his versatility and his sympathy with many movements. "If Canada became the great friendly nation of the world, that would be the most fitting tribute we could pay to Bengough's memory." Mr. Smythe quoted what Carlyle had said of Dickens, "the good, the gentle, the high-gifted, the ever friendly, ever noble Dickens, every inch an honest man;" and added "Is not that Bengough?" No man with a greater genius for friendship has been known to the present writer.

His mental action was as swift as his manual dexterity. On the occasion of a society banquet at which an American humorist from California had told one of those artfully elaborated stories that are the stock in trade of such travellers, Mr. Bengough on the conclusion of the tale went to work and in a few minutes produced a life-like portrait of the Californian as Moses in the bulrushes. In the portrait of Adam on page 58, a similar study in the nude is to be seen. Indeed it would be difficult to find a book that lends itself more naturally to such illustrations *in puris naturalibus* than *Sartor.*

Thackeray, who was himself a skilful artist, has imitated Carlyle and also depicted the grand monarch as *Rex* and as *Rex Lodovicus* with poor *Lodovicus* himself standing between the empty trappings and the trapped emptiness, a bald-pated, pot-bellied, thin-shanked atomy fully a foot shorter than the berobed simulacrum of Majesty behind him. This appeared in Thackeray's first book printed in England: *The Paris Sketchbook*, London, 1840. But, as in Carlyle's case, with *Sartor*, there had been a previous volume published in America in 1838 by Messrs. Carey and Hart of Philadelphia. This was the *Yellowplush Correspondence*, which had been appearing in Fraser's

Magazine from November, 1837, to August, 1838. It was the first volume of Thackeray's writings ever issued. So the two first satires of Carlyle and Thackeray were first published in book form in the United States. A year later, August, 1839, N. P. Willis writes to the New York *Corsair*: "I find that the authors of the two best periodical series of papers that have appeared for twenty years are one and the same person . . . the only things in periodical

literature, except the *Pickwick Papers*, for which I looked with any interest or eagerness." These were Thackeray's *Yellowplush Papers* and his *Reminisences of Major Gahagan*. It is evident that Willis did not share Emerson's enthusiasm for *Sartor*.

Thackeray had reviewed Carlyle's *French Revolution* in the *Times* on its first appearance in 1837 and it is interesting to read Carlyle's comment, in a letter to his brother: "the writer is one Thackeray, a half monstrous Cornish giant, kind of painter, Cambridge man, and Paris newspaper correspondent; who is now writing for his life

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in London. . .His article is rather like him, and, I suppose, calculated to do the book good." In 1832 Thackeray had written to his mother, "Not the least of Charles Buller's greater advantages than most men was that Carlyle was his tutor."

Carlyle was less pleased with Thackeray when in August, 1844, the writer for *Punch* accepted the offer of a free tour on the P. & O. steamer *From Cornhill to Grand Cairo*. Sir Charles Duffy tells us that Carlyle compared this transaction to the practice of a blind fiddler going to and fro on a penny ferry boat in Scotland and playing tunes to the passengers for half-pence. Charles Buller told Thackeray about this and when he complained informed him frankly that he ought not to have done it, out of respect for his profession.

These points of view illustrate the difference between the fierce independence of the Scottish man of low degree and the readiness to accept a favour on the part of one who belonged to the English ruling class. The incident may also remind us that these transactions took place nearly one hundred years ago.

The following is Mr. Bengough's introduction to his Notes on the book.

Sartor Resartus
(The Tailor Patched)

This was Carlyle's first original book, begun about 1832, when he was thirty-six, and finished within a few years. He had as yet published nothing but translations from the German, a Life of Schiller and a number of essays in magazines.

Sartor was in fact the extension to a book of a sketch in essay form sent to a London magazine but refused. It is in allegorical guise, an autobiography of Carlyle,

who is himself Teufelsdröckh, and sets forth his early life and education, his religious opinions and his philosophy.

Though his first book it is considered on the whole his masterpiece.

Let the reader who would see and enjoy its wonderful beauties read it slowly and thoughtfully, and more than once.

Carlyle went to London in 1834 to get a publisher for this. After much trouble it was accepted by Murray, but that gentleman subsequently backed out and it ultimately appeared serially in Fraser's Magazine.

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Bengough's account of the first publication of *Sartor* omits mention of the fact that the editor of Fraser's Magazine reported that the article was received with "unqualified dissatisfaction". Long after, writing to his mother on June 12, 1838, Carlyle tells her and us of his dealings with Fraser. "Fraser, who I suspect had heard of my being on the search, and of what ill speed I had, Fraser, I say, *drew up* all of a sudden, and was quite determined that *he* would go on the "half-profits" system or not at all. Whereupon I said to myself, 'Not thou, O Fraser, not thou but another; *any* other is preferable to thee'!" So I walked over, and made a half-profits bargain with "Saunders and Offley", a book-selling house of far better

character than Fraser's. . .*Teufelsdröckh* accordingly is actually at press; and I can hope to give my mother an English copy of him in regular shape before long. Poor fellow, he has had a sore struggle to get out here, some seven years or more; but having started up in Yankeeland, they were forced to let him out here; he *would* not keep down. Good luck to him we will say; though perhaps he is no great shakes after all, poor fellow. How the Yankees are going on with printing you will see by these flaming epistles, which I send along with this." (New Letters of T. C. i, p. 127.)

When one remembers the long drawn out parturition of *Sartor*, of which Carlyle wrote to Göthe on January 22nd, 1831, "In the meanwhile I am working at another curious enterprise of my own, which is yet too amorphous to be prophesied of," and of which the first English edition in book form had not appeared, as we see by the letter to his mother, six years after Göthe's death, we may conclude that Carlyle was not speaking with mock modesty when he called Teufelsdröckh a "poor fellow". None the less from the first criticism of that clever woman, Mrs. Jane Welsh Carlyle, "the book is a work of genius" to the last clever woman who has criticised Carlyle, Mary Agnes Hamilton, who calls *Sartor* "the most remarkable book of a century, at once work of art and message of thrilling penetration", it has found a steadily growing number of sympathetic and appreciative readers. Nor are the male critics less ready to exalt the merits of Carlyle. The latest French historian of our literature, Professor Louis Cazamian, while recognizing the influence upon him of the genius of German literature, finds in *Sartor Resartus* 'a veritable storehouse of ideas, a centre of germinating thought. . . . . The feverish zeal which animates this strange book is like an exaggerated form

of the transcendental enthusiasm to which, according to popular imagination, the disciples of Kant were keyed up. But it matters little whether the theme of the "Clothes"—of universal symbolism—or that of the development and succession of forms is derived from such or such a precise source. The passionate ardour which brings these themes into prominence wells up from the deep personality of Carlyle himself. It is the spirit of biblical prophecy, the exaltation of the Puritan apocalypse, that fire the fervour of this philosophic poet who represents, one might say, the fusion of a metaphysical idealism with the burning faith of an Ezekiel.'

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Cazamian has made a special study of Carlyle and his exposition of the influence, the work and the style of the Chelsea philosopher in the third chapter of Book VI, is one of the best things in his excellent history of modern English literature. It reaches this climax: "That divining power he possesses to search the past or the present, fallible and limited as it is, casts forth, when favoured by spiritual grace, flashes of vivid light and even of beauty which are among the treasures of literature."

Among these purple patches of Carlyle's is the charming Blumine episode in *Sartor*, Bk. II. This forms another link between Carlyle and Canada. For according

to a theory which has the support of Froude and, what is much more authoritative, that of Carlyle himself, the Blumine of *Sartor* is none other than Miss Margaret Gordon, born in Prince Edward Island, whom he met in Kirkcaldy in his twenty second year. Their parting was as described in Chapter V of the Second Book. The "some richer" whom she wedded was Mr. (afterwards Sir) Alex. Bannerman, who, as Governor of Prince Edward, brought her back to that island in 1850. The fact that local tradition, which must have been derived from the lady's own lips, recognized her as Blumine seems to make her the most likely model for the heroine of *Sartor Resartus*.

A few personal reminiscences may bring this article to a close. At the writer's first Christmas dinner in Toronto in 1868 he met at the house of the late Waring Kennedy on Elm St., then a fashionable suburban quarter, the grand-nephew of Thomas Carlyle, then a professor in the Toronto Normal School, of which he afterwards became Principal. As Thackeray puts it, *Vidi tantum.* He approved his grand-uncle's theory rather than his practice. Frederic Harrison contrasted the two in his famous epigram, "Carlyle taught the doctrine of silence in thirty volumes."

At a Christmas meeting of the Modern Language Association many years afterwards Professor Goldwin Smith, the Honorary President, told us the story of his meeting with Carlyle at Holland House in his early manhood. On this occasion the poet Tennyson was present and Lady Holland wished him to recite from his poems. But it seems that Tennyson would not do so before Carlyle, so Goldwin was asked by Lady Holland to take Carlyle out into the garden and give the laureate an opportunity to gratify the rest of the company. This

he did and so, "I never heard the poet Tennyson reciting his own poems and cannot tell you how he did it."

The final note is a very interesting one. There is another very unique copy of *Sartor Resartus* in Toronto besides the illustrated copy of the late Mr. Bengough, which belongs to his brother Thomas, the well-known court stenographer. Another brother William, a portrait painter, has recently returned from New York to live in Toronto. When Carlyle published his Clothes Philosophy as a serial in Fraser's Magazine, Fraser made up a set of fifty-eight copies from the types of the magazine and gave them to the author, besides the £82 1s. in cash that he received for the articles.

These copies were distributed to friends and among them was one that came to the brother Alexander who about 1850 came to settle near Brantford. After long concealment in an old trunk it was brought to light again and is in the possession of Carlyle's grandnephew, Mr. John A. Carlyle of Harbord Collegiate Institute. The latter's utterances, as the president of the Collegiate teachers of Toronto, show a sympathy with the spirit of Geneva and the changing Zeitgeist of our time.

It is a curious coincidence that this centenary of Göthe's death should have brought to light so specially interesting a Canadian copy of the most original work of Göthe's greatest British disciple and the one in which by way of paradox he seems to be cavilling at the typical German philosopher. An even more curious coincidence is to be found in a letter from Göthe himself to Carlyle, announcing a gift of books sent in a parcel to Craigenputtock in June, 1831. The passage that follows is Charles Edgar Norton's translation, to be found in the correspondence between Göthe and Carlyle, pp. 272.

"Thus you now receive———

1. Four Parts of Marginal drawings by Neureuther, to my Parables and some of my other poems. Some years ago an old Prayer book was found in Munich in which the text took up the smallest part of the page, but the margins were adorned, in the most wonderful way, with figures and ornaments by Albrecht Dürer. The above-named young man was so fired by this example, that, with the most surprising skill, he set about making marginal drawings for many of my poems, and furnishing a comment upon them with pleasingly appropriate pictures. How this has succeeded one must see with one's own eyes, because it is something new, never seen before, and therefore not to be described. May this charming work afford our hermits of the county of Dumfries oft-repeated cheerful vistas of life!"

What Göthe is reported by Eckermann to have said of Neureuther's art may also be quoted as applicable in some measure to Bengough's marginal illustrations to *Sartor Resartus*. "In Art one does not easily meet with a more pleasing talent than Neureuther's. It is rare that an artist confines himself to what he is able to do well; most of them are anxious to do more than they can, and are eager to overstep the limits which nature has set to their talents. But of Neureuther one may say that he stands above his talent. Objects from all the kingdoms of nature are easily at his command. He draws, equally well, valleys, rocks, trees, animals, and men. He has taste, and is in a high degree, inventive and artistic; while lavishing such wealth on slight marginal drawings he seems to play with his talent, and the pleasure which usually accompanies the careless, free spending of ample riches is transferred to the spectator. No one has surpassed him in marginal drawing, even the

great talent of Albert Dürer served in this less as a model to him than an incitement. I will send a copy of these drawings to Mr. Carlyle in Scotland, and I hope to make with them no unwelcome present to that friend."

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It is interesting to compare with the above passage Carlyle's description of *Sartor Resartus* in his previous letter to Göthe. "For these last months I have been busy with a Piece more immediately my own: of this, should it ever become a printed volume and seem in the smallest worthy of such honour, a copy for Weimar will not be wanting. It is, after all, not a Picture that I am painting; it is but a half-reckless casting of the brush, with

its many frustrated colours, against the canvas; whether it will make good Foam is still a venture."

Göthe was never to see the *Sartor*, of which, as we have heard, the first (American) edition did not appear till 1836, four years after the death of the sage of Weimar. It would no doubt have appeared to Göthe as confirmation strong of the ability of "This clear and tranquil-hearted foreigner to recognise the noble, right-minded, right-intentioned man; and to form for himself the ideal of a mortal of the highest excellence." In the same packet which bore Neureuther's marginal drawings to Craigenputtock Göthe placed the certificate of "Fellowship in the Berlin Society for Foreign Literature", which had been bestowed on Carlyle at the *Hofrath's* suggestion.

The French Republican refugee in London, Cavaignac, who appealed so strongly to the sympathies of Carlyle and his wife, had a story that both of them were fond of quoting. It was of a drunken Frenchman, who vexed by some boys, rebuked them gravely with the words, "*Vous êtes des injustes. Je m'en appelle à la postérité.*" "You are not fair to me. I appeal my case to posterity." So might Carlyle have appealed from the early critics of *Sartor Resartus* who found its style so harsh and its matter so hard to understand. The most recent pronouncement on the book, contained in the colossal Encyclopedia by which Italy is answering the challenge of the great Spanish Encyclopedia recently completed, may be taken as an answer to the appeal from the court, not only of posterity but of the most ancient of the literary nations of the modern world, and the one that in recent years has shown the most marvelous advance in general culture. It is from the pen of Professor Giuseppe Gabetti of the University of Rome. A comparison with the extract from *Sartor* at the beginning of this article will

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convince the reader that the Italian has caught the style no less than the spirit of the book and is convinced of the honesty of the author. Translated it reads:

'The Jeanpaulian, realistic-romantic, ironic-lyric, *Sartor Resartus*, with the story of Professor Teufelsdröckh, who having arrived at the depth of scepticism in a kind of profound moral debility, finds through the

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fuliginous interior illumination the path of ascent from the "Everlasting No" of the kingdom of darkness to the "Everlasting Yea" of the empire of light, is already the book of liberation; and the "philosophy of clothes" which is expounded in it, the romantico-symbolic world "where all that exists is the vesture of God" is presented with the definite character of an act of faith.'

BENGOUGH AND CARLYLE

NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The two Carlyle portraits. Compare the fine fresh smooth youthful profile, with high Gladstonian collar and wide lapels to coat, of the 1837 sketch with the more elaborate work of the full-face pen-portrait of 1866. Observe in the latter the economy of strokes that show the shock of hair, contrasting with the delicate lines that bring out "the bar of Michael Angelo", and the deep meditation of the eyes and the care-worn expression of the countenance. There is something of depression to be seen even in the slope of the shoulders. It was in 1865 that Carlyle's wife died.

2. The portrait of Teufelsdröckh is first presented on the cover. It has the profusion of unkempt hair and the inquiring hypercritical look of the typical German professor. The fat face, pursed-up mouth and double chin are rather characteristic of the doctor of Canon, as well as of Civil Law. Herr Teufelsdröckh was J.U.D. (*i.e.*, Juris Utriusque Doctor). This sketch of Teufelsdröckh, though recognisable as a variant of the portrait on the cover, having something of the same inquiring look, has less of the sarcastic quality. How indeed could the professor be in such a mood when he has evidently just taken his long German pipe out of his mouth to say "*Prosit Blume!*" to his friend Heuschreke? Did Carlyle in selecting this name "grasshopper" hint at the story of Tithonus? And did Bengough mean to recall Goldwin Smith or Dr. Daniel Wilson when he made this sketch of the Hofrath?

3. *Re* Adam. "On this portion of the Work, with its profound glances into the Adam-Kadmon, or Primitive Element, here strangely brought into relation with the *Nifl* and *Muspel* (Darkness and Light) of the ancient North, it may be enough to say that its correctness of deduction, and depth of Talmudic and Rabbinical lore have filled perhaps not the worst Hebraist in Britain with something like astonishment. Chapter 5. *Re* Babel. "But quitting this twilight region, Teufelsdröckh hastens from the Tower of Babel, to follow the dispersion of Mankind over the whole habitable and habilable globe. *Ibid.* *Re* Progress. The idea of J. W. B. as indicated here is more like a transition from Tarzan of the Apes to Beau Brummel than Carlyle's own view of Progress as given in a letter to Emerson (1.6. 1837): "a set of Essays on Progress of the species and such like by a man whom I grieved to see confusing himself with that. Progress of the species is a thing I can get no good of at all."

Correspondence of T. C. and Emerson. Vol. I, p. 125.

4. The author is seated on a stool with a cutty pipe in his mouth such as Carlyle is said to have smoked in the kitchen at Scotsbrig with his mother. Again we note the fine drawing and the artful contrast between the substantial seated figure and the light lines used to indicate the loosely-lying leaves of the MS. The paragraph illustrated deserves quotation as a bit of characteristic Carlylese sardonic self-criticism.

BRINGING ORDER OUT OF CHAOS

"Many sections are of a debatable rubric, or even quite nondescript and unnameable; whereby the book not only loses in accessibility, but too often distresses us like some mad banquet; wherein all courses had been confounded, and fish and flesh, soup and solid, oyster-sauce, lettuce, Rhine wine and French mustard, were hurled into one huge tureen or trough, and the hungry Public

invited to help itself. To bring what order we can out of this Chaos shall be part of our endeavour." Chapter 4.

Carlyle here showed prophetic instinct. Jeffrey, Sterling, even Emerson himself, found fault with the style of *Sartor*, and the old Annandale farmer's question, "What's t'ouse o't?" remained a frequent quotation of Carlyle's journal and private letters.

5. "Thus does the good Homer not only nod but snore. Thus does Teufelsdröckh, wandering in regions where he had but little business, confound the old authentic Presbyterian Witchfinder with a new, spurious, imaginary Historian of the *Brittische Journalistik;* and so stumble on perhaps the most egregious blunder in Modern Literature."

6. Costume of Bolivar's Cavalry. 'The simplest costume', observes our professor, 'which I anywhere find alluded to in History is that used as regimental by Bolivar's Cavalry, in the late Columbian wars. A square blanket, twelve feet in diagonal, is provided (some were wont to cut off the corners and make it circular): in the centre a slit is effected eighteen inches long; through this the mother-naked Trooper introduces his head and neck; and so rides shielded from all weather, and in battle from many strokes (for he rolls it about his left arm); and not only dressed, but harnessed and draperied.

With which picture of a State of Nature affecting by its singularity, and old Roman contempt of the superfluous, we shall quit this part of our subject.'

Mark how the lean leg and hunched-up left shoulder of the gallant Gaucho seem to add to the swiftness of his steed. Chapter 7.

7. 'For my own part, these considerations, of our Clothes-thatch, and how, reaching inwards to our heart of hearts, it tailorises and demoralises us, fill me with a certain horror at myself and mankind; almost as one feels at those Dutch Cows, which, during the wet season, you see grazing deliberately with jackets and petticoats (of striped sacking), in the meadows of Gouda. Nevertheless there is something great in the moment when a man first strips himself of adventitious wrappages; and sees indeed that he is naked, and as Swift has it, "a forked straddling animal with bandy legs"; yet also a Spirit and unutterable Mystery of Mysteries.'

8. Red Commands Blue

'You see two individuals, one dressed in fine Red the other in coarse threadbare Blue: Red says to Blue, "Be hanged and anatomised:" Blue hears with a shudder and (O wonder of wonders!) marches sorrowfully to the gallows; is there noosed up, vibrates his hour, and the surgeons dissect him, and fit his bones into a skeleton for medical purposes. . .Has not your Red hanging-individual a horse-hair wig, squirrel skins, and a plush gown: whereby all mortals know that he is a JUDGE? Society, which the more I think of it astonishes me the more, is founded upon Cloth.' Chapter 9.

The Royal Reception

'Often in my atrabiliar moods when I read of pompous ceremonials, Frankfort coronations, Royal Drawing-rooms, Levees, Couchees; and how the ushers and macers and pursuivants are all in waiting; how Duke this is presented by Archduke that, and Colonel A by General B, and innumerable Bishops, Admirals, and miscellaneous Functionaries are advancing gallantly to the Anointed Presence; and I strive in my remote privacy, to form a clear picture of that solemnity—on a

sudden, as by some enchanter's wand, the—shall I speak it?—the clothes fly off the whole dramatic corps; and Dukes, Grandees, Bishops, Generals, Anointed Presence itself, every mother's son of them, stand straddling there, not a shirt on them; and I know not whether to laugh or weep. This physical or psychical infirmity, in which perhaps I am not singular, I have, after hesitation, thought right to publish, for the solace of those afflicted with the like.'

'It will remain to be examined in how far the SCARECROW as a Clothed Person is not also entitled to benefit of clergy . . . (for is not he too a Defender of Property, and Sovereign armed with the *terrors* of the law?).' Chapter 9.

9. To illustrate the passage:

'Thou wilt have no Mystery and Mysticism; wilt walk through thy world by the sunshine of what thou callest Truth, or even by the Hand-lamp of what I call Attorney-logic; and "explain" all, "account" for all, or believe nothing of it.'

"The man who cannot wonder . . . were he President of innumerable Royal Societies, and carried the whole *Mécanique Céleste* and *Hegel's Philosophy* . . . in his single head,—is but a Pair of Spectacles behind which there is no eye."

"Armer Teufel! Doth not thy Cow calve?"

10. The six paper bags containing Professor Teufelsdröckh's lucubrations and marked with the Southern Zodiacal Signs, beginning at Libra, might perhaps serve as Symbols for the many volumes published of Carlyle's own correspondence, the latest being his letters to Jenny Carlyle (Mrs. Robert Hanning of Hamilton, Ont.).

No. 10

THE METAPHYSICS OF IBSENISM

H. STEINHAUER

IBSEN'S apparently inexhaustible capacity for contradicting himself has sorely tried the patience of commentators and critics. Take, for example, the most characteristic of all Ibsen themes: the right of the individual to realize his self—so characteristic, that it has practically become synonymous with the name Ibsen. Yet just what is Ibsen's conviction on this question? *Brand*, written in 1866, is a vigorous denunciation of self-sacrifice and a plea for self-realization. *Peer Gynt*, which appeared the very next year, exposes the villainy of self-realization. *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *Rosmersholm* advocate self-realization. But *Pillars of Society*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The Wild Duck* and *Hedda Gabler* preach self-sacrifice.

One of the ideas which frequently recur in Ibsen's dramas is the thought that a life of lies may bring moral ruin upon an individual or a whole society. "I love my native town so much" says Dr. Stockman in *An Enemy of the People*, "that I had rather ruin it than see it flourish on a lie. All men who live on lies must be exterminated like vermin." Lona Hessel in *Pillars of Society* fights a bitter fight against Consul Bernick's life of lies and hypocrisy. *Ghosts* shows how Mrs. Alving's happiness has been destroyed by her willingness to act upon Pastor Manders' advice and build up a whole network of lies, designed to protect her degenerate husband's reputation. The same view is taken in *Hedda Gabler* and *Rosmersholm*. Yet in *The Wild Duck* Ibsen advocates the very opposite point of view. The tragedy, so Ibsen would have us believe through his spokesman Relling, is caused by Gregers Werle, because he will not allow his friend to go

on living a life of lies and deceit. Now where does Ibsen himself stand, with Stockman or with Relling, for or against truth?

Another favourite Ibsen problem is the question of the ideal marriage. Should a woman marry for love or from expedience? In a number of plays (*The Feast at Solhaug*, *Pillars of Society*, *Ghosts*, *Hedda Gabler*) Ibsen exposes the evils of marriage which is entered on for material advantage, and advocates a "true marriage". On the other hand, we find a whole series of marriages based on love, which turn out just as unhappily (*The Comedy of Love*, *A Doll's House*, *The Lady from the Sea*). At times Ibsen frankly advocates marriage from interest; and in *The Wild Duck* Relling ventures to doubt whether there is such a thing as a "true marriage".

Indeed a summary of Ibsen's views on marriage would yield some such results as the following: a marriage from prudence is not a true marriage (Mrs. Alving, Hedda Gabler, Consul Bernick); a marriage for love is equally bad (Nora Helmer, Wangel); the husband should try to educate his wife (Wangel, Bernick); the wife should educate herself (Nora); when the marriage turns out unhappily and is not a "true marriage", the wife should leave her husband (Nora, Ellida Wangel); she should stay on with her husband and try to convert him (Mrs. Bernick); a marriage should be dissolved whenever one of the parties disagrees (Nora, Mrs. Alving, Ellida, Mrs. Elvsted); a man who abandons his wife commits a heinous crime (Bernick, Werle); there is no "true marriage" (Relling)!

This résumé of Ibsen's views on marriage was made by Max Nordau, in his notorious book *Degeneration*, which appeared in 1893. If we remember that he was writing at a time when the mere mention of Ibsen's name

was enough to send a pious *frisson* through the souls of all good English, French and German citizens; when Clement Scott, the official legislator on the British Parnassus, was shocked into using foul language about Ibsen and Ibsen's admirers, we can almost forgive Nordau for concluding that Ibsen was a degenerate maniac, who should be locked up in an insane asylum, along with Wagner, Nietzsche, Swinburne and the other decadents. Now that Ibsen has been canonized and given a place beside Aeschylus, Sophocles and Shakespeare, the epithets of Scott, Nordau and their disciples are reserved for expressionists, cubists, transitionists and other revolutionaries. Yet Nordau's old question still remains unanswered: what does Ibsen teach?

The simplest way out of the dilemma is, of course, to conclude that Ibsen does not teach anything, that he is a pure artist, interested in describing incident and character for their own sake, without troubling himself about the ethical problems which are implied in this description of life and society. The letters and fragments which Ibsen left behind seem to lend colour to this contention, improbable though it seems at first sight. For these sources reveal an Ibsen who is profoundly preoccupied with studying human nature from every angle, especially human nature in its weaker and uglier manifestations. They show an Ibsen who ruthlessly dissects priests, politicians, business men, society women, and then uses them as material for his plays. When we remember that Ibsen merits a place among the immortals as a dramatist alone, what sense is there in trying to foist a "philosophy" upon his objective pictures of life, especially since he himself has more than once

expressly stated that he is not interested in preaching, but in describing life as he sees it?

Accordingly, scholars have set to work upon the Norwegian playwright with that favourite academic scalpel, the historical method. They have delved into the background of Ibsen's life; they have carefully noted every minor event in Scandinavian history which could be at all related to incidents in the plays; they have explored the personal lives of any friends and acquaintances who might have served as models or partial models for Ibsen's characters from Brand to Rubek.

Of the numerous critics and commentators on Ibsen, Mr. Bernard Shaw seems to be alone in disregarding Ibsen's protests against those who seek to systematize his dramas and to erect a metaphysic on them. Himself a creative writer, Mr. Shaw believes that "the existence of a discoverable and perfectly definite thesis in a poet's work by no means depends on the completeness of his own intellectual consciousness of it." This principle of interpretative criticism, which Mr. Shaw also applies to Wagner's work in *The Perfect Wagnerite*, is beginning to find a few champions only to-day, but we use it unconsciously all the time. Goethe once expressed to Eckermann his annoyance with the people who kept asking him what "idea" he had sought to embody in *Faust*. "As if I knew myself!" Goethe said and went on to deny that he had had any philosophical thesis in mind in writing his great drama. Yet to-day no one disputes that *Faust* is a metaphysical drama, and every critic tries his hand at unravelling the mystery. And Mr. Shaw, who is always honest with himself, once replied to someone who asked him the meaning of *Heartbreak House*, "Why ask me? I am only the author!"

The Quintessence of Ibsenism, which Mr. Shaw wrote in

1890, interprets all of Ibsen's work, from *Brand* to *When We Dead Awaken*, as a many-sided attack on the cult of idealism in the nineteenth century and a proclamation of neo-Protestant individualism.

What is this idealism against which Ibsen warred? An idealist, as Mr. Shaw uses the term, is a man who regulates his conduct according to an idea or formula, which is fixed, absolute and supposedly eternal. An idealist is ready to sacrifice everyone and everything, including himself, to realize the particular ideal that he happens to worship, whether he call it Duty, Love, God or what not. Since our physical and mental environment is constantly changing, just like the cells in our bodies, it seems only reasonable to expect that our ideals too would be modified to suit the different conditions of each generation, and indeed of each individual. Yet that is the last thing an idealist will think of; if the ideal is not suited to man, he says, so much the worse for man—it becomes his duty to sacrifice himself to the ideal.

Idealism is thus in reality synonymous with idolatry; it is the modern Moloch, to which we sacrifice not only our children but ourselves. When the prophets of the Old Testament denounced idolatry, says Mr. Shaw, they did not mean bowing down to stocks and stones; they were referring to the ideals which are preached in our churches, the seven deadly virtues applied indiscriminately. Only there is an advantage in referring to the vice as idealism rather than idolatry. For when you call a man a rascally idealist, he is not only shocked and indignant but puzzled and therefore willing to listen to you. But if you call him a rascally idolator, he concludes calmly that you do not know that he is a member of the Church of England.

What Shaw offers in place of this blind worship of

ideals or idols is a realistic and pragmatic philosophy of life, based on experience and common sense (the most uncommon kind of sense there is). Conduct should not follow a dead and abstract formula, but should be determined by a consideration of the circumstances in which a problem arises. There are times when truth, love, chastity, forgiveness, patriotism are virtues; but there are also times when they are positive vices. There is no golden rule; every problem should be settled on its own merits. "You call it cowardice" says Pastor Manders to Mrs. Alving, "to do your plain duty? Have you forgotten that a son ought to love and honour his father and mother?" "Do not let us talk in such general terms" she replies. "Let us ask: ought Oswald to love and honour Chamberlain Alving?"

Ibsen is the great protagonist of this new realism and the lesson of his plays, says Mr. Shaw, is that there should be

> no more and no less respect for virginity than for incontinence, for subordination than for rebellion, for legality than for illegality, for piety than for blasphemy; in short, for the standard qualities than for the standard faults. Ibsen protests against the ordinary assumption that there are certain moral institutions which justify all means used to maintain them, and insists that the supreme end shall be the inspired, eternal, ever growing one, not the external, unchanging, artificial one; not the letter but the spirit; not the contract but the object of the contract; not the abstract law but the living will.

We have been taught that there is one supreme or sovereign good. No, there are two hundred and eighty sovereign goods, said Montaigne. Or, as Shaw himself

puts it, Ibsenism cannot be reduced to a formula; its quintessence is that there is no formula.

Anyone at all familiar with the writings of William James will at once see that Ibsen (according to the Shavian interpretation) is preaching a pragmatic pluralism. The idealism which he attacks is James' *bête noire*, monism. But Ibsen, being a dramatist, is concerned chiefly with the ethical, not the metaphysical, side of pragmatism. He seeks criteria for conduct and finds those which James postulated later on: common sense, compromise, the empirical method, the judgment of every case on its own merits.

Now if we approach Ibsen's plays in the spirit of Shaw's theory, we shall find that they consist of a series of theses and antitheses, not to be resolved, in Hegelian fashion, into higher syntheses, but showing how dangerous it is to set up theses (that is, generalizations) at all. In *Brand*, his first important philosophical drama, Ibsen began his life-long attack on idealism by showing how a great idealist, an essentially "good" man, may cause more disaster through his fanatical devotion to the ideal of truth, love or duty than a whole battalion of villains at their worst. Brand indulges in an orgy of self-sacrifice to the ideal of "All or Nothing", which ends with the death of his wife and child and his own destruction by an avalanche. A very fitting end to an incurable romanticist who forgets his duty to himself in his fanatical zeal to minister to the spiritual needs of the peasants in the fjord country.

The very next year Ibsen wrote *Peer Gynt*. Peer has learned the lesson which *Brand* taught. He is not going to sacrifice himself for anyone. He seeks to realize himself. "Peer Gynt, Emperor of Himself," is the legend

which he inscribes as a motto above his cottage door; and he acts upon it too. He carries off a bride from a wedding-feast, only to abandon her later. He engages in the slave trade, the Bible trade, the whiskey trade, the missionary trade. He falls in love with the daughter of the Trold king; becomes a false prophet; hails the fickle siren Anitra as Goethe's Eternal Feminine; and ends up in an insane asylum at Cairo. Has Ibsen, then, gone back on the philosophy of self-realization that he advocated in *Brand?* Not at all. He only warns us that it is just as dangerous to make an ideal of self-realization as of self-sacrifice. It is all very well for a man like Brand to realize his natural instincts, because Brand is a noble man with noble instincts, a man who is of inestimable value to society. But Peer Gynt is a bounder with the impulses of a fool, a braggart and a liar. Self-realization for Peer means being sufficient unto himself, which is only a fancy synonym for selfishness. You cannot realize yourself, says Ibsen, unless you have a self to realize. If we regard Peer as a sample of the half-baked Bohemians who infest every cultural and artistic centre and practice all the poetical licences without producing any poetry, then we can readily see why Ibsen consigned Peer to the button moulder.

But this is by no means Ibsen's last word on the question of self-sacrifice and self-realization, on the rights of the individual and his duties to society. Determined to impress upon his audience the dangers of setting up absolute norms of conduct without regard for the circumstances out of which they arise, Ibsen produced three more dramas: *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts* and *An Enemy of the People*, dealing with different aspects of the same problem.

We are apt to forget, in picking the plum out of

A Doll's House, that there is some very solid material surrounding it. It is true that the central theme of that play is the danger of treating woman as a mere plaything rather than as a companion who has a right to live her own life and to realize her own self; but the moral is not as baldly stated as is usually assumed. Mrs. Linden, for instance (a character who is wholly sympathetic to Ibsen), is a woman whose entire life has been one of self-sacrifice for others, and who makes one more sacrifice before the end of the play. She is proud to have been able to keep her mother's last days free from care, even if it meant denying herself the simplest necessities of life. There is no happiness in working for oneself, she tells Krogstad; she wants somebody and something to work for.

Indeed, Nora herself is essentially a self-sacrificing soul, who is only driven to champion self-realization through the stupidity of her husband. Ibsen made her a spendthrift, so that her strength of character might stand out all the more clearly. For when she believes her Torvald's life to be in danger, she gladly suffers any amount of hardship and self-denial to give him back his health. Nor does Ibsen object to this on principle. Had Torvald treated her like a human being instead of a pretty doll, there would never have been a tragedy. What makes Nora's immolation intolerable is her husband's extreme selfishness, his blind worship of respectability above everything else; this forces her to have recourse to lies and criminal dealings with shady characters, because she knows that he would not allow her to do anything that is not respectable. When she is finally driven to the wall, threatened with exposure by the rascally Krogstad, a last desperate hope arises within her that the miracle may happen after all; that the man

for whose sake she committed forgery will reward her noble deed by taking the consequences upon himself. But he only loses his temper completely and heaps abuse on her. It is then that her eyes are opened to his true character; she realizes that she has been living in a doll's house until now and decides to go out into the world and educate herself. Under these circumstances, says Ibsen, there is nothing for Nora to do but slam the door in his face and start life anew.

For had she stayed on, her whole life would have been one continuous stretch of misery. Mrs. Alving, another self-sacrificing soul, did stay on, although she had even more cause than Nora to leave her husband. Out of shame and a sense of duty she stayed on with a man who was a drunkard and a licentious degenerate. She remained with him upon the advice of a noble idealist, Pastor Manders, one of that host of ignorant, interfering simpletons who cheerfully prescribe duty and self-sacrifice to those who trust them. *Ghosts* shows us what Mrs. Alving made of her life because she did not have Nora Helmer's courage to slam the door in her husband's face and begin to think of her duty to herself. Many years later Mrs. Alving herself recognized that it was nothing but cowardice which had kept her at home to lead that life of unrelieved misery. If people had come to know anything, she tells Pastor Manders, they would have said: "Poor man! with a runaway wife, no wonder he kicks over the traces."

From such characters as Mrs. Linden in *A Doll's House* and Mrs. Elvsted in *Hedda Gabler* and, on a far higher plane, Hilda Wangel in *The Master Builder*, we may learn that Ibsen does not despise idealism and self-sacrifice when the victim is fully conscious of what he is doing and feels that, by denying himself for the sake of others, he

is realizing a fundamental instinct in his own nature. What Ibsen objects to is an idealist like Brand or Pastor Manders, who persuade or bully other people over whom they have some kind of control, into bearing the cross, when these unfortunate souls have no desire to suffer martyrdom. But the tremendous indictment of self-sacrifice contained in *Brand*, *Ghosts* and *A Doll's House* is by no means to be interpreted as a categorical hostility on Ibsen's part to self-sacrifice in general. This, in effect, is what he tells us in his next play, *An Enemy of the People*.

Dr. Stockman, like Brand, sacrifices his wife and children to his ideals. Why then does Ibsen approve of Stockman wholeheartedly, when he condemned Brand, Mrs. Alving and all the other idealists in his rogues' gallery? Brand's ideal of "All or Nothing" (which really means "all", not "nothing"), is a catchword applied blindly and indiscriminately, whether it fits the circumstances or not. Brand takes a fiendish delight in self-sacrifice for its own sake. Stockman, on the other hand, is not a professional idealist at all, in Ibsen's use of the term. He is facing a situation which involves the physical well-being of a whole community. He alone is forced to fight against a whole gang of pillars of society or vested interests, who are prepared to see thousands of people perish, if only they can further their own material ends. In such a case anyone who hesitated to sacrifice himself for the truth would be a selfish egotist of the basest kind. There is a vast difference between Stockman's honest determination to fight for the truth, even if it brings about his financial ruin and social ostracism, and Brand's almost sadistic passion for causing suffering, on the one hand, or Mrs. Alving's self-immolation to preserve a lie intact, to swindle the world into believing her husband a model citizen, on the other.

There is a second point which we must not forget. Brand, like his more despicable brother Pastor Manders, had a special weakness for sacrificing other people to his ideals. Nothing short of an avalanche was able to weaken his ardour in prescribing self-denial to others. Stockman does not sacrifice his family. They gladly and willingly accept the sacrifice themselves, because they realize the importance of fighting the rascals who are in authority, and the service which the doctor may render his community. Under such circumstances Ibsen completely approves of Stockman's self-sacrifice and his sacrifice of wife, children and friends.

Closely linked with the problem of self-sacrifice and self-realization is the question of the limits of truth telling. What does Ibsen teach on this subject?

STOCKMAN: I love my native town so much, that I had rather ruin it than see it flourishing on a lie. All men who live on lies must be exterminated like vermin.

An Enemy of the People.

RELLING: I said illusion. For illusion, you know, is the stimulating principle. Rob the average man of his life illusion and you rob him of his happiness at the same time.

The Wild Duck.

Max Nordau placed the above two passages side by side as conclusive evidence of Ibsen's imbecility. What is Ibsen's real opinion? he asked. Is a man to strive for truth or swelter in deceit? Is Ibsen with Stockman or with Relling? Indeed, the case against Ibsen could be made much stronger still. Nordau might have selected any one out of a score of passages from *Pillars of Society*, in which Ibsen proclaims as a general principle the danger

of founding a society on the treacherous quicksands of deceit and dishonesty. Sooner or later the whole structure is bound to topple over and reveal all the rottenness and decay on which it had been founded. The same warning is issued in many significant speeches of *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts*. Yet the whole of *The Wild Duck* is a showing-up of an intolerable, meddlesome truth-teller, who ruins a whole family by following the advice which Ibsen himself gave in his earlier plays!

The solution to this apparently insane contradiction is (partly at least) contained in the very passages which Nordau quoted to confound Ibsen. The deception against which Stockman and his family are fighting in *An Enemy of the People* consists of a deliberate attempt on the part of a gang of scoundrels to defraud their fellow citizens and to endanger the lives of thousands. No one can deny that the revelation of such a state of affairs is worth any amount of sacrifice. The same is true in *Pillars of Society*, where Consul Bernick and his capitalist friends have agreed to divide between them the harvest gleaned from a public utility, at the same time that they are willing to be hailed as unselfish servants of the community. Such men are rotten to the core, and a society which harbours them is doomed to destruction. In *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* we find the same situation. Here, it is true, the consequences affect only one family in each case; but that is only a difference in degree, not in quality. The moral effect on Nora and Mrs. Alving of having to live in fear and trembling lest they be discovered by the outside world is just as pernicious to them as in the case of Stockman's and Bernick's communities.

The circumstances in *The Wild Duck*, on the other hand, are totally different. In the first place, we must not forget the kind of people we are dealing with. "Rob

the *average* man of his life illusion" says Relling in the speech quoted above. It is one thing to expect a leader of society like Bernick or Mrs. Alving to face the truth about themselves, however painful it may be. It is another to expect a poor, weak, insignificant failure like Hjalmar Ekdal to do the same. Besides (and this is the important point) the deception practised by the pillars of society is poisonous in its effects: in *Pillars of Society* and *An Enemy of the People* it is wholesale robbery; in *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* it is hypocrisy. Hjalmar Ekdal, however, is guilty of no crime. His deception consists in trying to pass himself off as a great inventor with a brilliant future before him. He succeeds in fooling no one, not even his ignorant wife. Everyone sees through him, except himself. What harm is there in his continuing to regard himself as a great man, if it makes him happy to do so? If that interfering fool Gregers Werle had not undertaken to enlighten him on this and other matters, Hjalmar might have lived on in the bliss of ignorance all his life, without causing harm to a single soul.

A variant of the theme treated in *The Wild Duck* is found in *Rosmersholm*. In Rosmer we have another instance of a man who thinks he is a leader of men, destined to do great things, when in reality he is a mere mediocrity who will never leave a mark on history. Again Ibsen shows the harm that is done by an outsider, Rebecca West, who interferes and tries to shatter his illusion. And if we add to this list *The Master Builder*, in which Ibsen treats still another aspect of the same problem, the illusion which is essential to a mediocre man, we have three great dramas pitted against three others; *Pillars of Society*, *Ghosts*, *An Enemy of the People* maintain that society must be built on the solid rock of truth, while *The Wild Duck*, *Rosmersholm*, *The Master Builder*

show the necessity of harmless illusion for life. And so once more the main Ibsen thesis is driven home with a sledge hammer: there is no absolute criterion of conduct; every case must be settled according to the individual circumstances out of which it arises.

All this seems perfectly obvious when baldly stated. Yet Nordau could miss the obvious and tried to accuse Ibsen of degeneracy from the very plays and passages which ought to have guided him to an understanding of his subject. Even so sympathetic a critic as Oskar Walzel, writing at a time when Ibsen's genius could no longer be doubted, contrasted *The Wild Duck* with *Pillars of Society* and *Ghosts* and concluded that if Ibsen were judged as a metaphysician, he could not escape the charge of muddle-headedness!

Regarded as so many variations on the one anti-idealist theme, Ibsen's plays gain in profundity what they lose in variety. His tremendous historico-metaphysical drama *Emperor and Galilean* (Ibsen considered it his greatest work), which deals with the old antithesis of Hellenism and Hebraism and ends with the vision of a "third empire" transcending both these stages in the evolution of the human race; *Hedda Gabler*, that very strange attack on original genius and seeming glorification of mediocrity; *The Master Builder*, buried in the depths of symbolism; and the other three final plays written in the valley of the shadow of death—all these yield their mystery and obscurity when interpreted in the light of the theory advanced in this paper.

Far from leaving Ibsen a muddle-headed metaphysician, as even his admirers must ruefully regard him, this interpretation shows a remarkable unity in his whole life activity. It absolves Ibsen from the charge which is being increasingly levelled against him: that he is an

occasional writer, whose topical dramas have long dated, and shows him to be wrestling with a fundamental instinct in human nature: the will to over-simplify the manifold aspect of reality. It reduces him, to be sure, to a man of one idea; but when we remember what monstrous villainy can parade under the protective banner of the "idealism" he denounced, we shall readily concede that the idea was worth emphasizing even to the point of tedium.

A study of Ibsen's influence on modern literature reveals the fact that what the creative writers who sat at the feet of the master found most worthy of developing in his work is just this attack on idealism, which is the central theme in all of Ibsen's plays. In the drama of the Naturalistic school, for example, we no longer find the traditional villain, who brings about the tragedy by defying the laws of morality which society accepts. The new villain is usually a "good" man or, as Ibsen would have said, an idealist, whose very goodness destroys life and happiness. The tragic conflict is no longer between good and evil in the old sense of the terms, but between two conceptions of good, between two ethics. And when Hebbel's *Maria Magdalena*, which was published in 1844, was regarded by Ibsen himself as an early example of his own contribution to nineteenth century literature, the reference was certainly not to Ibsen's curious retrospective technique, nor to his introduction of the discussion of ideas into his plays, nor to his use of scientific and modern notions such as heredity, feminism and socialism; Hebbel's drama has none of these. What *Maria Magdalena* does possess is an Ibsen villain; in Meister Anton, Hebbel conceived the idealist Brand twenty years before Ibsen created him.

Creative writers, then, have been able to pick out what is central in Ibsen's work. Bernard Shaw, being a very extraordinary combination of creative and critical talent, saw Ibsen's message at once. But it is amazing to find critics, whether academic or journalistic, groping about in the dark, analysing and synthesising, interpreting and explaining, justifying or condemning, quoting Aristotle or giving their impressions and missing the point which is written all over Ibsen's plays and post-Ibsen drama. It is even more amazing to find *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, which pointed to the right path at a time when Ibsen criticism was still in its infancy, not even mentioned by most of the critics and scholars and no more than mentioned by the rest. It speaks ill for the "science" of literary criticism that, after forty years in which the crop of Ibsen literature has been rich at least in quantity, someone should have to call attention to Mr. Shaw's little book as supplying the solution to the problems raised by Ibsen's metaphysic.

There are two explanations for this strange phenomenon. We must remember that during the last half century literary criticism has been dominated by the historical method. As long as critics saw in the works of a dramatist or novelist nothing but a transcription of his own life and experience or of the history of his family, his friends or his contemporaries, we could not expect a philosophical interpretation if Ibsen's dramas. We got instead the dry, pedantic, insignificant, fact-grubbing scholarship of our immediate ancestors. Fortunately the pendulum has swung at last; the science of literary criticism has made a great step forward in largely abandoning the historical method and in seeking to base its judgments on a careful but humane or "philosophical" study of the works of the author. It is this new approach

which Nietzsche championed in his pamphlet on the use and abuse of history and which Mr. Shaw quietly employed in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. As he was about half a century ahead of his time, it is perhaps small wonder that he attracted no attention among the learned.

The other explanation I offer with a good deal of hesitation. Can it be that the silence surrounding *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* is but another example of that eternal conspiracy on the part of the specialists to discredit the amateur?

THE THUNDER BIRD OF THE MOUNTAINS

MARIUS BARBEAU

FOUR of us were busy around a small campfire, cooking our luncheon on the beach, while our little troupe of Indians had moved away to the edge of the bush.

The discovery we had made thrilled us—a row of totem poles, the tallest and finest we had yet seen, and completely lost in this remote forest. We were still further spellbound by the native pageantry which we had just witnessed at the foot of those impressive memorial columns, where carved figures rose out of the shrubbery and climbed upon each other into the sky.

This vista was so full of human expressiveness against a background of wild nature that we were aroused as if by inspiration to a new understanding of cultural values in life and in art. Understanding is not the right word, for we were unawares groping for it. It still eluded our full grasp. But we were on our way, undergoing a novel experience that made us wiser at every step. At least that was the hidden spiritual link between us at the moment, the seething force within that already sought an outlet and charged the atmosphere with unseen magnetic waves.

To come down to material facts, the air exuded warmth and moisture; the mosquitoes were legion; we worried a bit lest an electric storm might climb over us and dampen our enthusiasm for the work before it was finished that day, that of making further records of native songs, dances and wood carvings in the settings where they truly belonged.

As we had luncheon on the beach, our eyes ranged over the grandiose scenery. Mountain tops were tipped with snow and glaciers; they lifted their dented heads thousands of feet high. The river was so wide here, near its estuary, that it looked more like an arm of the sea. So thick the forest was with its dark evergreens and prickly undergrowth that we would never have thought of venturing beyond the clearing of the old deserted village on the river bank. Mountain gorges, dark and mysterious in the distance, must have been full of bears that at this time of the year fished salmon out of the creeks.

If the scenery at a sweep was colossal and forbidding, its lower reaches all around tantalized us with its intriguing strangeness. It was exotic in the extreme, Asiatic-like perhaps, with some of the semi-tropical features of the South Seas. Yet we were a good long way from Asia or Polynesia. We really sat on the nearer side of the Pacific Ocean. This was the Nass River, close to Portland Canal which forms the boundary between Alaska and northern British Columbia.

Dr. Ernest MacMillan, a musician and member of our group, abstractedly marked time with his left hand while he bit into his sandwich of rye-krisp and cold ham, and he kept humming a tune with a look of tense concern over his face. He was trying to whip something into shape; yet he obviously met with handicaps that he could not easily overcome.

"You seem to be in difficulties with that tune," I remarked. This was the first word spoken between us for a long while.

"Wretchedly intricate!" he answered. "The song is alright. It is beautiful and haunting; it is grand! Yet I cannot quite grasp it. The tune moves along at a marked pace, the drum accompaniment at another. Listen to

this, the tune, one-two-three . . . eight, nine; it sounds like nine-eight. Against this the drum beats are something else, slower, quite different. Now listen to the melody itself, the intervals. How plaintively the voice rises and falls, like the wind in a storm. For modernity it goes beyond all the moderns; yet how strangely moving! Yes, a real song! Not only for the Indians, but for us. The voice of nature crying out! Yet those things can't be written down on our stave, they simply can't!"

"Too bad!" I answered. "Yet don't you think they are very definite things in time and in pitch, even if they differ from our usage, or challenge our habits? What is our stave if not a rack upon which to pin down sounds and rhythms whatever they are, more or less? This song baffles us, yet it seems natural to the Indians themselves. Did you not see that seven-year-old Indian girl beating the cross-rhythm with her hands while she sang the tune like the others? Not the slightest difficulty in this for a native child, to her it is like the air she breathes. Why is it so puzzling for us civilized men, why for you, a composer, an orchestra leader and the director of a music conservatory?"

"I know!" he acknowledged with a chuckle, "but the point is that the blessed thing is still beyond me."

This disappointed me at the moment. But have patience! Perhaps a solution soon may be found around the corner.

While my friend the musician with a searching mind kept counting six or nine in quickly running numerals scanned by a hesitant hand, I left him alone to his troubles, and turned to the carved figures on the totem poles that stood like fantastic idols almost over us. One of the poles leaned over at a sharp angle, as if ready to come down with a crash. My eye met that of Langdon

Kihn, the New York painter, who had accompanied us in our exploration along the Northwest coast.

"Look at the Eagle up there!" he said, pointing to the bird with outspread wings at the top of a huge pole, eighty feet tall. "Our American Eagle is not a patch on that fellow! Look at the head! It wears a crown—the King of the Mountains. The beak is curved back with a vicious hook, it means death. And the wings! I know only those of the Egyptian vulture to approach these as a piece of design."

Gulping down sandwiches in haste, we raved over these magnificent carved structures that once had stood in front of a row of lodges, to indicate the owner's identity. But the lodges had since fallen down. Only the poles were left, in the bush.

Carved with animal figures from top to bottom, they were more than just symbols of a heraldic character, or mythic tales picturized in wood. If their stylized designs referred to traditional history, they impressed us first of all with their bold forcefulness as works of art. Barbaric, if you will, those eagles and beavers, that killer-whale whose tail was clutched by a man, or that grizzly-bear whose teeth bit viciously a large copper shield in native style, the only bear we cared to remember.

Kihn was emphatic in his belief that no white sculptor could ever have done as good a job with a tall stick like this, carving over thirty figures of birds and animals one on top of another, and yet have achieved unity, refinement and grandeur. A masterpiece indeed!

"How fine are those native faces!" he added. "Strikingly true to life, yet with such clean and simplified lines. Not merely in the abstract, but endowed with something very personal, quite Indian. Notice the irony here, the fun there, as in our gargoyles. I wish I could get at things

as this fellow did in every one of his figures. A master wood-carver to his marrow-bones! What was his name, again?"

"Oyai," I said, having studied these things with native informants: I was the ethnologist of the party. "He was one of the leading artists of his time on the Nass. He died not so long ago, forty, fifty years, it seems. Look at that old man there—Geetiks; he knew him in his childhood and learned carving from him. Geetiks himself was a good carver, but he never wields the chisel now. It is beneath his dignity as a Christian and civilized Indian!"

We walked around the poles, then from one to the other, through patches of nettles that burnt our hands like fire. Dr. Watson, the artist photographer of our party, a gifted amateur from Rochester, N.Y., set up his tripod and got his motion picture camera into position. The Indians, seeing this, gathered once more at the foot of the beaver-eagle pole, and we strolled over in their direction. We would resume our work before the clouds interfered with it, and they were slowly invading from the west the glittering light over our heads. On the way we plucked delicious red and black currents off the bushes, now grown wild, which the natives had planted there in the early days.

There was a haunting charm about this place, for the many traces left by the hand of man. But the most impressive thing in it now was its solitude, its remoteness, its mystery. It had something of a Paradise Lost after the downfall. Its inhabitants, the Geetiks tribe, had shifted to another place many years ago, or else had almost completely died out. One of them, however, had refused to follow the lead down the river to the mission village of Place-of-scalps, near Portland Canal. For several years he had stayed by himself with his wives

(polygamy was the luxury of chiefs among them), in the Beaver-house the four posts of which still jutted out of the shrubs, on the river bank.

And here he stood in person, whose nickname for this reason still was Geetiks, old Geetiks, in front of Dr. Watson's camera, ready to resume the Eagle Dance which the luncheon had brought to a standstill.

* * *

"Now the song!" Chief Geetiks cried out with a ringing voice, and his attendants responded with a throbbing of skin drums.

Dr. Watson began to turn the crank of his camera, while we witnessed in front of the lens the awakening of a people from its accustomed lethargy.

The old chief, instead of a fisherman's soiled overalls, now donned kingly regalia that made of him a grandee of the earth, a Chilkat robe with white, blue and yellow eye and claw designs, leggings of lacquer red flannel with beaded trimmings; on his head a crown surmounted with long sea-lion bristles, from which hung over his back a long train of ermine skins white as the snow. The carved plaque on his forehead represented the proud head of an eagle, its beak half open, his own clan emblem. He danced spiritedly to a song, in a semi-circle, shaking a rattle in his right hand—a rattle jewel-like for its intricate carvings and its insertions of haliotis pearl from the sea. The words of his song were: "The Golden Eagle of the Mountains will spread his wings, as he sits among the chiefs on the hill tops." While the natives sustained with quick beats on their skin drums a low rumbling voice like that of the storm, some women in blue and red blankets danced in the background, bending their bodies to the right and their heads to the left, and then inversely, in turns. The effect was striking. It gave animation to

the forest behind. The trees leaned one way or the other with like motions. So it seemed to the eye.

The chief continued his hymn: "I have borrowed the skin of Skyamsem, the great Thunder-bird, I don his garment as my own. I don it, and my voice rings above the common noises of the valley. It reaches out into space like that of Thunder of the air." He spread his arms, waving them under the Chilkat that heaved in the manner of wings while its long fringe dropped feather-like. His new-found personality verged on the mythic. Aroused by spiritual fervor he had virtually become the Thunder-bird of native mythology, ready to fly between sky and earth.

He proceeded with the song without a pause: "The mighty Skyamsem crept into my garments, crept as gently as daylight does in the wake of darkness at sunrise. Behold him, ye all assembled, as he clears the trail for the great chief once more returning to your midst! The mountain tops are lost in the clouds; they are melting away under an avalanche of hail and rain. Soon they will crumble into mud; they will slide down into the rivers to the sea. But the Thunder now flashes lightning! The mountains brighten once more; they stand high above the clouds. Behold the flashes, behold the lightning!"

Transfigured, the Indians rose in their dance from the depths to spectacular heights. Dispirited and slovenly in ordinary life, they were now lifted into a higher plane, like spirits swaying their exalted selves over the shrubbery or living gods in a bespangled pantheon. Their chief continued his incantation: "When the Eagle spreads his wings over the valley, he loosens his snake belt and whips the air with it." He actually slashed the air with his arms, sweeping the valley from the snow-capped ranges on one side to the glaciers on the other, towards the

dented Alaskan glaciers. The chorus responded in full tones, yet softly: "The shaft of lightning tears the sky asunder, and the thunderbolt hits the peaks."

How impressive this native make-believe, how grandiose in its miraculous escape from the low levels of reality! I looked around at MacMillan, then at Kihn. Both were enthralled. Nobody seemed to notice that the storm was near, I mean, the real storm, not that conjured by those witch-like Indians. Rain soon would come down upon us, though the sun still shone over our heads; but the clouds would soon smother it. A flash of lightning sparkled. Dr. Watson turned his head, looked up, and shot the question at us: "Had we not better get ready?"

Yes, it was high time, but the Indians seemed not to mind it. The old chief went on with another phase of the ritual song to the words:

"Who will see me when I fall off the Mountain tops?" The chorus responded:

"Who will see him when the Otter lures him away from his high path?"

The allusion to the Otter struck me somehow as significant; I wanted to remember it. The mythic Otter is the evil charmer of men, who leads them away to the lakes of perdition. But there was no time to think; we must hurry!

Something roared over our heads. Puzzled, we looked up and saw an aeroplane flying low, apparently trying to beat the storm. It was on its way on a special errand from Prince Rupert to the Premier Copper Mine of Anyox up Portland Canal. An aeroplane is no new thing nowadays, even to the natives of the far Northwest. Surveyors, government officials, adventurers of the air all have invaded the privacy of Indian hunting grounds, even inaccessible glaciers on mountain tops. But the appear-

ance of one at this moment was like a shock. Somehow it did not belong to the tableau that had just cast its spell over us—the spell of the mystic past. Now the present awakened us, with the throbbing of its explosive gas. The charm of native pageantry was broken. Every one craned his neck at the aerial machine, in semi-wonder. The Indians pulled off their garments, and rushed for the cabin in the motor boat. Rain was already upon us, falling in splashes.

The Indians were still wrapped up in song as our speed-boat purred on its way down the estuary of the river. To the beats of their drums now they sang to each other:

"Hush! Stop your idle chatter! Why don't you mind your own affairs?"

Old Geetiks, once more in the garb of a plain fisherman, sang the solos in between refrains. I could not understand the full meaning of the words and was intrigued. The song was swift and spirited. MacMillan evidently listened intently to the tune. And our Indians, standing at the stern of the boat, were enjoying the fun by themselves.

"What is the meaning of this?" I whispered to Beynon, my Tsimsyan interpreter. "Why do they find such fun in the words, Stop your idle chatter! Are they aimed at someone in particular?"

"They are! That's the point," answered Beynon, his eyes twinkling. And he turned his back to the singers, so that they might not notice his explanation to me.

"Well, what is it?" I enquired. Watson and Kihn drew near. But MacMillan again was too deeply absorbed in the intricacies of tune and rhythm to notice. Beynon hastily explained. "That's an old story—twenty or thirty years old already. I don't suppose he has com-

posed another song since. Those things are no longer done. The folk now take on the songs of the White Man instead."

"Then this song is his own composition. Not bad!" and I warned MacMillan of this. He remarked, "A jolly good tune at that!"

Beynon resumed: "Geetiks was the last of the pagans on the Nass. All the other chiefs had renounced their customs. The wood carvers had dropped their tools. They all flocked to the mission town down the river, at Place-of-scalps." "A good pagan name for a Christian town!" Watson said. "Reverend Mr. Collison could not change it," Beynon went on. "It was an old fishing station for halibut; and names stay on."

Kihn enquired, "It must have required years to convert the people, some would say to civilize them!" But he said this as if he very much doubted whether *civilize* was the right word.

"Years?" Beynon jeered, forgetting his restraint. "Why, no! It all happened for Christmas one year—in 1880. The tribes had assembled for a pagan feast, down the river. But something happened. A 'craze' swept over them like wildfire. Everybody was caught. No one resisted. To become a Christian was the thing. Don't pay your *potlatch* (pagan) debts was the catch-word of the new Christians. Everyone was glad to get rid of his debts, as everyone was in debt. The people wanted to start anew, with a clean sheet. Another condition was, the chiefs must discard their wives but one. One wife to one Christian. But this Geetiks would not do, the old fellow over there. For years, he stayed on at the village of Geetiks, alone with his three wives. The others made fun of him. They thought he cared too much for his wives, or else he found them too valuable as hard workers."

"In other words," I anticipated, "the Christians would not let him alone, and he composed the song for a retort. Is that it?"

"Not quite like this," answered Beynon. "One Christmas day Mr. Collison, seeing Geetiks at the front door of the church, walked up to him and said, "Mind you the condition before you enter!" To his surprise the pagan hauled down his colours; he at last had made up his mind to be monogamous and enter the fold. When he came up for baptism the next day, the people were surprised to see him bring along a young woman from Hutseenee, a strange tribe to the north. 'Who is she?' the missionary wanted to know. His new bride! 'What about the three others?' Too bad! he hadn't been able to make up his mind to choose between them. They were so equally meritorious that he would rather not hurt the feelings of two in favour of a third. So he had dismissed them all three. Here he was now, for a fresh start in life, like other neophytes, with snow-white innocence."

That was Beynon's account of Geetik's efforts towards redemption. We laughed at the idea. "So did the people at the time!" Beynon added, grinning. "The families of his former wives did not miss a chance. They taunted him as soon as they saw him. He felt that Christianity somehow had disgraced him. But he did not accept defeat lying down. Very soon he gave a large feast in the pagan style and distributed so many gifts that he 'buried' the slanderers under his lavishness. Shamed, they would no longer let their tongues loose, because he had sung to them, as you just heard him."

Now we listened to the song itself, as it went on and on for so long that we could almost sing it ourselves, in spite of its complicated cross-rhythm:

The chorus: "Hush, stop your idle chatter! Why do you mind my own affairs?"

Geetiks: "Why do you gossip about me? Why do you point your finger at me when your own hand is unclean? I speak to you, women of the Salmon-weirs!"

The chorus: "Hush, stop your idle chatter!. . ."

Geetiks: "Why do you single me out as the only black sheep? For this alone must I believe that I am lost like the rest? Oh, stop your idle chatter! I speak to you, women of the Place-of-Scalps."

The chorus: "Hush, stop your idle chatter!"

Geetiks: "You meddle in my affairs and waste your breath over me. . .Why should I mind you when my heart pines away? My own sweetheart I have not seen for a full moon, the Hutseenee beauty that will make a Christian of me!"

Still bent upon unravelling the relation between rhythm and tune, Dr. MacMillan exclaimed, "I have it this time, but it's much easier than the other: three beats to a bar whereas the drum keeps on at two—three against two. Try it! One-two-three, and one-two, right along. Quite nice, quite sophisticated for these savages, eh! And how consistently well carried out throughout." And we cheerily agreed to the tune: "Hush, stop your idle chatter!"

* * *

In camp that night we laboured at readjusting our sense of cultural values in the light of our new experience.

What we had witnessed that day was a revival of things belonging to the past, quite dead in themselves—real things though, and throbbing with the flush of spiritual life at the moment of their resurrection. But we could not find the terms wherewith to express our minds. We were still groping in the dark for a word or two, a

definition, the proper ones. Unawares we were looking for a peg on the wall upon which to hang the new picture flashed upon us up the river and still vivid in our imagination. Meanwhile we hurled vague words at each other—art, culture, civilization, and what not!—and we devoured our frugal supper like ogres. In our exhilaration, we jumped from summit to mountain top, with the seven-league boots of folk-tale memory. Add to this the stimulus of a hot toddy prepared just before supper by an expert hand from New England. A dry showing the way to the wets, and admirably!

Into the seething cauldron of our search for truth we cast our tailor-cut notions and tried to fish out new concepts more to our satisfaction. One would toss the question, "Are those carved figures on totem poles real art?" And out would come many answers, all tentative. "Indeed they are! But primitive art, from a spontaneous people not yet acquainted with our civilization."

Another would say, "Why primitive? Are not those figures of the eagle, of the killer-whale, of these Indians grinning or sobbing, not real art, full-grown? Have not the real life models passed through the conceptual eye of a mature artist? Why pretend there is a difference here between the savage and the civilized? What difference does it make in art if the artist is brown or white, if he drives a Rolls-Royce or paddles a canoe? I would rather paddle a canoe myself, my own canoe!" "Right you are!" we answered. "Art is wherever you find it. A mighty good thing, it is getting rarer every day! It does not really matter whether it is primitive or sophisticated; it is just plainly good or bad. And how good was that eagle on top of the pole at Geetiks, so much better than ours in every way!"

"You speak of your national emblem?" I said, "What

about ours, the beaver? Did you not see that sitting beaver gnawing a stick at the lower end of the pole?" "Yes," answered Kihn; "a splendid carving, a thing never to be forgotten, the first created beaver I have ever seen."

"Well, listen to this!" I added. "After three hundred years of pictorial use as an emblem by the Hudson's Bay Company and the people of Canada, the beaver still remains a rodent with a clumsy tail. When the sailors saw it painted on a Canadian ship during the world war they protested. It meant evil luck, like a rat gnawing at the hull of a wooden ship; and sinking it to the bottom. To them our national beaver was nothing but a rat. And they were not so far wrong!"

"Eureka!" shouted MacMillan, who had not shared in the discussion but had gone straight to a work table after supper. "Here I have it at last!" Music sheets in hand he showed us what his trouble had been with cross-rhythm and puzzling melody. "Look here!" he said, pointing out with pencil on paper how the song "Hush! stop your idle chatter!" ran consistently, the melody to one rhythm and the drum beats to another. It looked simple enough, once conceived. Yet it was not so easily reproduced. Taking an Indian drum hanging upon the wall he sang it quite accurately, beating the drum as he did, though with an effort that betrayed the lack of habit. We applauded him. Quite a feat for a white musician to overcome the intricacies of native music! "Wait a moment!" he went on, picking up another sheet from the table. "And this one!" which he qualified with a very vigorous name. He sang the Eagle song we had heard at the foot of the carved poles.

"Wakayaw . . . The Golden Eagle of the Mountains spreads his wings. . ."

He proceeded to demonstrate learnedly how the nine-

eight rhythm of the tune coincided with the six-eight of the drum. "A tough job!", he exclaimed, "try it!" But we would rather not. We took him at his word. The spell of these songs was upon him, we could see, for their swaying appeal, and their vocal fitness in the picture that still haunted him. They were human, they were alive, yet above all they were art, not low-down savage art, but an art which challenged all his powers by its complex effervescence. "There is something I can do with this!" he said, and he at once began to scribble a composition that issued freely from a new-found vista of inspiration.

Kihn, the painter, who had left the closed circle and moved to another part of the room, dashed pencil lines across a large canvas under the bright acetylene light. His imagination also was ablaze with this strange world of evocation.

Watson headed for his bromide trays and his film rolls. The discussion had collapsed before it had reached a harbour of grace. So I walked out and stood by myself at the edge of the sea, under a huge cedar tree.

* * *

The night was dark, like pitch. The warm, still atmosphere was charged with moisture and electricity. The waves washed the boulders on the shore under the cut-bank. Some fishermen were drifting their nets in the dark, on the oncoming tide. The only sign of their presence, miles away from shore, was their mast-light or the noise of an oar dumped into the boat. The majestic expanse of sea, mountain ranges and blue sky were still there as in the daytime. But I could not see them. Darkness wrapped them up in slumber. In the night they were as if nonexistent. The words the Indian sang about the Otter recurred to me, "I will lure that man away from his high path."

Somehow I groped for a link—for I felt its hidden presence intuitively—between those seemingly disconnected elements: the Eagle casting his snake belt, the haughty chief singing the Thunder-bird song as if he were himself a god, the flash of lightning, then the Otter leading the Indians to perdition, and finally the aeroplane shattering our vision. Still what had these things to do with our discussion?

I know! Those Indians had been lured away from their own path in life, and they had gone astray into the bogs. And who was to blame if not the Otter, the charmer? But the Otter, who was she—if not a symbol? What did the native syren stand for? Civilization, no doubt, our own gift to them, the Indians. Civilization, our Christianity, our trade goods, our tools, our worship of the machine—in a word, the White Man, parcel and all! Fifty years after the natives had adopted our devices wholesale, they had become a wasted lot, with nothing truly their own either new or ancient. This night, they were drifting with their cannery nets to the whirlpools. They were dragged down by the feet one by one. Indeed they were almost extinct now, extinct in most ways. Civilization, the great Killer, was engulfing them. Moloch once was its name.

Civilization? Well, what is it? A thing to boast of to be sure, and very real. Those who use it most are the Man in the street and the Thinker. The Thinker turns it inside out and tries to analyze it, but he usually ends by being entangled in its meshes. Witness, those obscure tomes that fill our shelves under its banner. They mostly disagree with each other. The real solution is still a puzzle. The puzzle this day was upon us, four civilized men venturing into the wilderness!

But the fellow in the street, the auto driver, has far

clearer notions about it, for he is practical—being a working man. Civilization has lifted him by his bootstraps into the seventh heaven. It is light as opposed to the darkness. It is the white man's privilege, which is plentiful enough to be forced down the throat of all comers, black, yellow or red. And it is largely the creation of the nineteenth or twentieth century. Wait until to-morrow and you will walk the skies! The universe will be stripped of its last secret.

Yes, I understand it now, whether right or wrong. Civilization is the white man's fetish; so is his self-centered notion of progress, he sitting on the peaks.

But in the light of what we had seen this day, was civilization an unmixed blessing, a blessing to all without exception?

I could not conceive how in itself it was a breeder of life. Is it not rather a stepping-stone whereon to stand, or again, a thing inert in itself, like a tool? A useful thing to its very core, though. The aeroplane that had flown before our eyes had not fostered new songs, but it had silenced one, probably silenced it forever. So has civilization hushed the Indians, and many others within its fold. Our progress and civilization have stultified independent growth, in many parts of the globe, have worked havoc even with unaided biological processes far and wide. Like the Otter, the charmer, they have often lured spontaneous life away from its natural course.

Yes, civilization is ours, it is big, it is unique and it is centrifugal. Upon it now hinges the world from pole to pole. But it hurls projectiles away, in its gyrations. Beware the stragglers in mankind whom fate has planted around the periphery!

A flash of lightning brought back vividly into existence the broad sweep of Portland Canal and the snow-capped

ranges beyond. A moment of full daylight in the depth of night! Turning towards the cottage, I saw through the window my friends working away at music sheets and at a canvas.

"And what is culture?" I wondered.

There was a symbolic resemblance between it and the flash of lightning I had just seen. But there is so much confusion in our concepts—civilization and culture being mistaken for one—that I must demur a moment.

Where belonged the aeroplane purring across our faces, or the speed-boat that hustled us down stream to our headquarters? To civilization indeed. We used them, but none of us here could construct them. They were external things, mere paraphernalia, hired and operated for convenience or usefulness.

Culture was in another sphere. It emerged to my eyes by way of elimination, out of chaos. It was man's gift when, aroused by inspiration, he created something new out of himself; it was MacMillan's endowment when, fired into action, he fashioned a composition; it was also Kihn's own, who had already begun to brush into shape a splendid canvass: MacMillan's composition has since been awarded a first prize in an international competition, and Kihn's picture was later acquired by the National Gallery of Canada and is one of the only three American canvasses there. Culture was the gift no less of those obscure native artists who had recast nature in a new mould, their own, either in sound or in plastic form. They had made the animals they knew into demi-gods, and had composed songs that made us feel and made us sing.

Civilization is like a refuse heap in a way, or again a pyramid. It stands high and we sit on its top. It has risen in layers through the ages, every year adding its bit to the upper strata. It is also the storehouse of humanity

as we know it now. It despises the individual and is too big to know the accidental. Its ultimate destiny is beyond our comprehension.

How much more soothing to the heart is culture! It appears everywhere like sunlight, yet it is as elusive as a mirage. Seek it and it is lost; give up the search and it comes back. Like the bud it bursts into bloom. It is chance and inspiration. Yet it rests upon heredity, upon past achievements. It is a human creation out of the spring of life. It makes existence worthwhile to the few who have found it, even though for a short day in their lives. Its revelation is the grace of the gods. It comes unheralded to the pure- hearted whose path lies on the heights, whoever they are, primitive or civilized.

In a word, it is the flash of lightning that illuminates the night, and strikes the summits—when it does—like the Thunder-bird of the mountains.

THE CENTENARY OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

M. W. Wallace

MEN have always been interested in anniversaries, whether of events in their own lives or the lives of others. When we can say that a great man was born or a great battle fought exactly one hundred or one thousand years ago, the event takes on in our minds a fresh reality, and temporarily at least we feel that we have defeated the rolling years in their task of blotting out all human happenings. To one of a studious or scholarly bent it is, therefore, a most natural thing to use these recurring anniversaries as an opportunity for revising one's judgment as to the significance of the men or events which have preceded us. Indeed, much of the best literary criticism of the present century has been written as a contribution to these secular celebrations.

Sir Walter Scott died on September 21, 1832, and during the present year there have been a number of new and significant attempts to re-estimate the character of the man, and the permanent value of his contribution to literature. Mr. John Buchan has written a most readable *Life* in which warm enthusiasm is tempered by a finely discriminating feeling for literary worth. Mr. Buchan regards Sir Walter as the greatest and most representative of Scotsmen. Lord David Cecil in a stimulating essay contributed to *Life and Letters* places him almost alone of English writers in the narrow aristocracy of the world's novelists.

Many other eminent critics from Bagehot and Ruskin to Professor Elton have appraised Scott's worth in high

terms, but it would be idle to pretend that the passing of time has enhanced his popular reputation. In his own day his popularity was a unique phenomenon. With characteristic modesty he himself was accustomed to depreciate the abiding worth of his novels, and to think that their hurried frankness of composition would please soldiers, sailors and young people of bold and active dispositions. I know not how it may be with the soldiers and sailors of to-day, but the great majority of young people of all dispositions refuse to be pleased. They can draw up a formidable list of the defects of Scott's qualities. All the most trenchant criticisms of the past century are warmly re-echoed by them. Stevenson thought him a day-dreamer, but hardly a great artist. Carlyle thought his characters fashioned from the skin inwards, that he never got near the heart of them. "It seems to us there goes other stuff to the making of great men than can be detected here. His life was worldly, his ambitions were worldly, there is nothing spiritual in him. All is economic, material, of the earth, earthy. He wished not the world to elevate itself, to amend itself, to do this or do that, except simply pay him for the books he kept writing." In our own day Mr. E. M. Forster thinks Scott a glorified writer of children's books. Any undergraduate can tell you of his *longueurs*, how slowly his novels get under way, how absurdly stilted is his language, how impossible his heroes and heroines, how conventional his outlook on life. Perhaps the best we can say for him is that literary reputations are notoriously subject to ebbs and flows, and that the centenary of Scott's death finds his reputation at the ebb, at any rate as far as the general reader is concerned. It may be of interest to examine the causes of Scott's present disrepute, and to attempt a brief

analysis of those qualities in his novels in which his strength peculiarly resides.

It is not strange that Scott's popularity should have waned in our own day: indeed, it is inevitable. On the morrow of a world catastrophe we are sceptical of all the values which yesterday were taken for granted. To call a point of view nineteenth century is to condemn it. We are seeking painfully to find a new interpretation, to discover a better way of living and thinking. We are willing to explore those paths which were forbidden, and we suspect the past of hypocrisy or at best stupidity in government, economics, religion. We may not be sure where the truth lies, but we do not propose any longer to be deceived by orthodoxies and conventionalisms. In a word, most contemporary thinking is in an oddly fluid state, and instinctively we react against the rigidities and reticences of the past. No one is found to defend the status quo: in a sense we are all reformers. Scott's was a conservative temperament, and on the whole he thought that a wise man should accept the world as he found it and make the best of it. Not that he was merely callous or stupid: in certain respects his deep human sympathies led him far in advance of his times. For instance, he believed in unemployment insurance and would have the whole cost assessed against the employers, a belief which he put into practice at Abbotsford. He did not believe that all men were equals, and he distrusted grandiose schemes which proceeded on that assumption. He reverenced great men, and in his study of history found nothing to admire more than simple goodness. Reverence is out of fashion to-day, and we study history primarily for the purpose of "debunking" it. The mood of cynical disillusion was alien to Scott. On the whole he believed that life was good, but one must not demand better bread

than can be made of wheat. It is good to feel the warmth of the sun and to love wife and friends and children, to ride a horse, to have conversation, to dream dreams, to read about the past, to work and to play. Not a Puritan in any sense, he believes, nevertheless, that human life must be organized or it tends to be brutish. To Scott morality or goodness is merely sanity, good sense, the natural response of the normal man when he has not sunk beneath himself to greed and hypocrisy and cruelty. The fact that human beings are male and female adds enormously to the delight of living, but sex is not the only source of human interest. The problems to which it gives rise in society are not best solved by public and detailed discussions of so intimate a subject. Reticence and vulgarity are both words of very definite meaning in Scott's vocabulary. Right and wrong are also very definite and fairly simple terms, except when two loyalties (both creditable) come into conflict. Like Shakespeare he thought it easier to teach twenty men how to do right than to be one of the twenty. Hence he has little interest in the minutiae of psychological analysis. He presents his characters in their words and actions, and admits us to little of their private reflections. He shows us unflinchingly the pain, the misery, the frustration of many lives, but the moral is kindliness and sympathy on the one hand, courage and a spirit of acceptance on the other. To curse whatever brute or blackguard made the world, as we are invited to do by a contemporary poet, would have seemed to Scott merely childish ill-temper, hardly to be dignified by the name of blasphemy. He does not believe that men can smash the ordered fabric of society and shape it nearer to the heart's desire. He profoundly distrusts those who harbour such ambitions: like Burke he believes that the spirit of discontent and rebellion is

largely sterile. He would have wished that his books, if they were to have any influence on his fellows, might reconcile them to life, might console them in sorrow, and make them rejoice anew in the good things that life brings.

A brief analysis of Scott's outlook, such as the foregoing, shows how far removed it is from that of our contemporary world. And the analysis might be carried much farther. Scott is a prince of story tellers, but to-day we are inclined to suspect a story as an artificial thing in itself. Realistic reproduction of non-significant facts or events would have seemed to him merely pointless. But enough has been said to make it clear that the reader who does not love Scott will not be at a loss to find a reason why.

It is a commonplace to say that we should not condemn an author because he lacks the virtues which we find in some one else, but it is a commonplace that needs constant repetition. Literature is a writer's imaginative reconstruction of his experience, and in relation to the whole world of possible human experience no author's achievement is other than fragmentary. It has been said that Scott's world is a narrow one. That is quite true. It is equally true of Wordsworth, of Milton, of Shelley. Shakespeare seems to us wonderful in nothing more than in the fact that his world far transcends those of all other men—that he is myriad-minded. But the experience of most great men is a limited experience, and that portion of it which they are able to share with us convincingly and delightfully is still smaller. It was so with Scott. His dream world, which he was able to reproduce in great literature for our delight, was the local world of his own Scotland during the century or so before his birth. It was a small, remote, half-civilized land, poverty-stricken and torn by periodic civil war. It was a world of Scotch

religion, Scotch manners and Scotch drink, calculated, no doubt, to repel the fastidious, but capable of being transmuted into fine gold by him who possessed the philosopher's stone. Moreover, it was only certain aspects of this somewhat drab, provincial scene that appealed to Scott's imagination. He loved the hills and valleys and streams that he had known from childhood, and he loved his fellow-countrymen. To his partial mind they seemed more highly individualized than other men. They were a serious-minded folk of intense convictions and fierce loyalties; their poverty had saved them from many vices if it had also circumscribed their outlook. They had found compensation variously in religion and learning and high adventure. Though the country was small it had produced an amazing variety of human types, soldiers, statesmen, poets, gypsies, tinkers and beggars, but in all classes the individual constantly rose victorious above the type in a multitude of highly differentiated "characters" running through a whole gamut of grave and gay and comic into oddities and abnormalities.

Scott's birth and the influences that shaped his early years conspired to fill his imagination with the glamour of the recent past of his native land. From childhood he loved to be solitary and to live in the old world of the ballads and of tradition, and of Scottish history. The heroes of these tales were Scotts and Eliots and Campbells, McDougalls and Murrays and Grahams. They bore the same names as his relations and friends, and were their not distant forefathers. He himself was in the seventh generation of direct descent from Auld Watt of Harden and Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow—no bad genealogy, as he remarks, for a Border Minstrel. His father was a strict Calvinist who delighted in the details of Church history. His mother, a daughter of the

Professor of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh, was a grand-daughter of Sir John Swinton of Swinton, "a family", Scott remarks, "which produced many distinguished warriors during the middle ages, and which, for antiquity and honourable alliances, may rank with any in Britain." His mother, he tells us, was devoted to poetry and works of imagination. As a small boy he recalls reading aloud to her Pope's translation of Homer, "which excepting a few traditionary ballads and the songs in Allan Ramsay's *Evergreen* was the first poetry which I perused. My mother had good natural taste and great feeling: she used to make me pause upon those passages which expressed generous and worthy sentiments, and if she could not divert me from those which were descriptive of battle and tumult, she contrived at least to divide my attention between them. My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and the terrible—the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day." Much of the boy's childhood was passed at Sandy-Knowe, his grandfather's farm. His grandmother "in whose youth the old Border depredations were a matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden, Willie Wight of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other heroes—merry-men all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John. A more recent hero but not of less note was the celebrated Diel of Littledean, whom she well remembered as he had married her mother's sister." Here, too, he met and talked to survivors of the battle of Culloden and heard tales of the cruelties that attended the execution of the vanquished. The result was that he became an ardent Jacobite, and devoted to the house of Stuart. Before entering High School he had read much of Shakespeare, Spenser and other authors,

besides Percy's *Reliques* and the works of Richardson, Mackenzie, Fielding, Smollett and other novelists. He had also acquired a reputation as a teller of tales to his school-fellows, and had learned to take delight in the world of his own imaginings even more than in the sports and the companionship of his young friends.

On the assumption that this youth was endowed with some degree of creative literary talent, it would have required no great power of divination to foretell the themes which would appeal to him, nor the nature of his treatment of them. By birth, by early training and by temperament, Scott was uniquely qualified to transmute the unregarded ores of Scottish history into the fine gold of literature, and it is not strange that his first serious literary ambition was to collect and preserve the fragmentary tales of epic events in the Scottish Border with which he had become acquainted in his successive raids into Liddesdale in search of ballads. So completely had he identified himself with this old world of derring-do that many sensible folk would have found it difficult to recognize in the poetic imaginings of the poet, the canny Edinburgh lawyer.

Most of us know something about the world of the imagination. We assent in a vague, wistful way to Wordsworth's statement:

> Wings have we, and as far as we can go,
> We may find pleasure.

But the dim region at our feet remains the solid reality in which the greater part of our time is spent, and we are satisfied to make occasional short flights into the virginal untroubled sky of our fancies. Like Bailie Nicol Jarvie, we are somewhat troubled by these intimations of a land of romance with its differing standards and creeds. "It's a queer thing o' me, gentlemen," said the

honest burgher, whose more lawful flights of imagination had to do with his some day becoming the provost of Glasgow, "that am a man of peace mysell, and a peaceful man's son . . . . it's a queer thing, I say, but I think the Hielan blude o' me warms at thae daft tales, and whiles, I like better to hear them than a word o' profit, gude forgie me! But they are vanities, sinfu' vanities—and moreover, again the statute law, again the statute and gospel law."

With Scott it was not so. He was not troubled by any contradiction between the statute or gospel law on the one hand and the old law of the Borders in the raiding days—

> That he shall take who has the power,
> And he shall keep who can.

He moved freely from the one world to the other with no sense of incongruity. Even while transacting prosaic business like a man of this world, his sub-conscious self might be taking part in daring exploits of the olden days. He found in both worlds the same men and women, moved by the same motives, and made happy or unhappy by the same considerations. The imaginary world was more simple. The events which took place in it were more picturesque. It had the fascination of customs which have passed away, of lost causes and impossible loyalties, of adventure, action, colour—romance. His simple nature loved the simpler life of the past (real or supposed), and the code of chivalry seemed adequate to him—reverence for God, loyalty to King and friends, respect for women, ability to ride a horse and wield a sword. There was nothing contradictory about being a citizen of both worlds, for they interpenetrated each other, and the one heightened the meaning and delight of the other.

This world of mingled romance and commonplace, of

princes and soldiers, burghers and fishermen and beggars is the picture of life which Scott presents to us in his novels. It is a picture in which he believes implicitly, and in it he finds the coherence and significance which we all seek in our contemplation of the contradictory phenomena of life. Like Hardy he looks on men as being primarily products of their historical environment, and accordingly he finds a minute study of that environment of very great interest. But his supreme interest is in the men and women themselves, not in their environment, nor in any theory of how they came to be what they are. Accordingly, when we recall a Scott novel it is individual characters or dramatic scenes that leap to our minds rather than the general story or historic events. His plots are oftentimes excellent in themselves, although too often his "hurried frankness of composition" meant carelessness or indifference to the artistic presentation of the story. He inherited the bad tradition of his predecessors of the eighteenth century, who generally allowed their plots to evolve in diffuse, loosely-controlled fashion, and his own instinctive artistry was often content to ignore the minutiae of form, proportion and arrangement. The historical background is always present and gives dignity and meaning to the strivings of individual characters. But Scott's interest is concentrated on the characters, and his success in presenting to us convincingly hundreds of men and women from the most varied walks of life with very rarely a hint of repetition, this achievement is his crowning glory. They are real to us as are the characters of Shakespeare, more real than most of the characters of history. Jeanie Deans, Cuddie Headrigg, Meg Merrilees, Edie Ochiltree are flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, and together they convey to us a sense of the infinite richness and variety and inexhaustible interest

of life. The best of them live in humble circumstances, and if we have been accustomed to thinking of the great and the highly-placed as having a monopoly of the interest and delight of life, we may learn again the lesson of Burns' *Twa Dogs*. On this point Scott had no doubt. When Washington Irving was his guest at Abbotsford, Scott said to him, "I wish to show you some of our really excellent Scotch people; not fine gentlemen and ladies, for such you can meet everywhere, and they are everywhere the same. The character of a nation is not to be learnt from its fine folks." Fine folks we have in plenty in the novels and many of them excellently done, but Scott's heart was in the portrayal of the humble.

Perhaps this is one reason why his heroes and heroines are rarely successful. So completely centred is Scott's interest on dramatic scenes or highly original minor characters that he is content to allow his heroes and heroines to merge into that background of the commonplace and the ordinary, which serves as a necessary foil for his more highly coloured pictures. They have all the requisite qualifications for their rôles except that of being interesting, and in this respect they suffer sadly by comparison with many of their humbler friends and acquaintances. The truth is that Scott shrank from depicting whole-heartedly the relations of lovers. Convention demanded a love story and he complied to a certain extent, but he never attempted to make it the real centre of our interest, nor will he spy upon the intimacies of his young friends more than convention demands. He felt about the matter much as many people feel to-day about the publication of the love-letters of those who have become famous. It is akin to his love of reticence in many relationships. The eavesdropper would have seemed to Scott to have sounded the very base string of

humility, and there was a kind of continental frankness which he hated with equally instinctive aversion. He never belittles the rôle that love plays in life, but that is no reason why one should cater to the unimaginative and sentimental. He carries his prejudices in the matter to incredible lengths. When one of his most delightful heroines is at length happily reunited with her lover after long months of separation, danger and sorrow, Scott says: "As their private conversations, however interesting to themselves, might probably be very little so to the reader, so far as it respected their present feelings and future prospects we shall pass it over, and only mention the information, etc." The reader hardly knows whether to be amused or exasperated. Scott was keenly sensitive to the beauty of women. Toward the end of his life he writes in his Journal: "What there is in our partiality to female beauty that commands a species of temporary homage from the aged, as well as ecstatic admiration from the young, I cannot conceive; but it is certain that a very large portion of some other amiable quality is too little to counterbalance the absolute want of this advantage." Moreover, he can teach us to rejoice in their beauty and their power to fascinate. It is only when it comes to depicting actual love scenes that Scott draws back, awkward and embarrassed. It is a limitation which has probably cost him more readers than any other single deficiency, and it is not only the sentimental and the unimaginative who find it hard to forgive him. An uninteresting hero is a terrible burden for any story to carry, and the artistic unity of the plot can be saved only by miracle. We do not clothe our author, it may be argued, in the garb of omniscience in order that he may indulge a *penchant* for reticence. We wish him to speak

with authority, and about whatever things in life men find of deepest interest.

It is true, nevertheless, that there are many other kinds of interest in life, and perhaps none of these is more nearly universal than the love of adventure. Here Scott caters to our desires in overflowing measure. We have already heard him confess that his boyhood enthusiasm for the wonderful and the terrible persisted throughout his life, and he might have added to these his love of a fight and of mystery. Indeed, at every period of his life his unconquerable naive boyishness of spirit is one of his outstanding traits. But even his love of adventure is less for the sake of adventure than for the strangely revealing light which it throws on the characters of those who take part in it. He has a profound belief in the dramatic values inherent in the simplest events and in the simplest lives: beneath the hum-drum of the daily round he is always conscious of meaning—of hidden significance. Ordinarily, this meaning is obscured to our eyes. But when events cease to flow like a monotonous stream and become a raging torrent, when life becomes intensified and more experience is compressed into "one crowded hour of glorious life" than into preceding years, then the living actors in the drama reveal themselves with corresponding vividness. There are hundreds of such scenes in Scott, and I can recall none of them of which it would not be true to say that the abiding impression left on our minds is a sense of our surprise and delight in suddenly revealed human qualities. Scott loves the quickened pulse and the taut nerve, the combat of wits or of swords, the sense of great impending decisions, but even more he delights in calling forth the potential capacities for good or evil of the puppets whom he has called into existence. Heroism unconscious of itself, courage that does not count

the cost, coolness in the face of thickening dangers, loyalty when everything is lost but the will to be loyal—these things reveal themselves before our astonished gaze as naturally and as miraculously as the leaves appear on the trees. Let us take an example from *Waverley*, the first of the novels. Fergus McIver's rebellion has been crushed and he himself is about to suffer the death-penalty. One of his followers, Evan Maccombich, a poor Highland gillie, is next to be tried:

"Evan Maccombich looked at him with great earnestness, and, rising up, seemed anxious to speak, but the confusion of the Court, and the perplexity arising from thinking in a language different from that in which he was to express himself kept him silent. There was a murmur of compassion among the spectators, from the idea that the poor fellow intended to plead the influence of his superior as an excuse for his crime. The judge commanded silence, and encouraged Evan to proceed:

'I was only ganging to say, my lord', said Evan in what he meant to be an insinuating manner, 'that if your excellent honour and the honourable Court would let Vich Ian Vohr gae free, just this once, and let him gae back to France, and no trouble King George's government again, ony six o' the very best o' his clan will be willing to be justified in his stead; and if you will just let me gae down to Glennaquoich I will fetch them up to ye myself, to head or hang, and ye may begin wi' me the very first man.'

Notwithstanding the solemnity of the occasion a sort of laugh was heard in the court at the extraordinary nature of the proposal. The judge checked this indecency, and Evan, looking sternly around when the murmur abated, said:

'If the Saxon gentlemen are laughing because a poor

man such as me thinks my life or the life of six of my degree is worth that of Vich Ian Vohr, it is like enough they may be very right; but if they laugh because they think I would not keep my word and come back to redeem him, I can tell them they ken neither the heart o' a Hielanman, nor the honour of a gentleman.'

There was no further inclination to laugh among the audience, and a dead silence ensued. The judge then pronounced upon both prisoners the sentence of the law of high treason."

One more example, this time from *Old Mortality*. Morton, after the battle of Bothwell Bridge, has met the blind widow, Bessie McClure. She is explaining to him that on one occasion she had taken in and fed and sheltered a young man of the opposite party, simply because he was being pursued by his enemies:

"I fed him and relieved him and kept him hidden till the pursuit was over."

"And who", said Morton, "dares disapprove of your having done so?"

"I kenna", answered the blind woman. "I gat ill will about it amang some o' our ain folk. They said I should hae been to him what Jael was to Sisera. But well I wot I had nae divine command to shed blood, and to save it was baith like a woman and a Christian. And then they said I wanted natural affection, to relieve ane that belonged to the band that murdered my twa sons."

"That murdered your twa sons?"

"Ay, Sir, tho' maybe ye'll gie their deaths another name. The tane fell wi sword in hand, fighting for a broken national Covenant; the tother—oh they took him and shot him dead on the green before his mother's face. My auld een dazzled when the shots were looten off, and to my thought they waxed weaker and weaker ever since

that weary day; and sorrow and heartbreak and tears that would not be dried might help on the disorder. But alas! betraying Lord Evandale's young blood to his enemies' sword wad n'er hae brought my Ninian and Johnnie alive again."

It is this inherent capacity of men and women to rise "aboon themsells," as the Scotch say, that fascinates Scott. It gives interest and meaning to humble lives in which the ordinary man would perceive nothing but the drab, or commonplace, or vulgar. The capacity for evil, which is also inherent in human beings, is similarly called forth by the stress of circumstances, but it must be said that here Scott is ordinarily less successful. His villains—Rashleigh Osbaldistone or Lady Ashton for example—are much less convincing portraitures. No doubt such people exist, we feel, but we do not enter into their innermost hearts with sympathetic comprehension. We are distressed and puzzled by them. They seem like alien phenomena who trouble a world from all the normal activities of which they are divorced. They inspire fear or aversion in their fellows; in themselves they are restless, unhappy, unsatisfied. Generally they illustrate an excess of ability or ambition, and they are always intensely egotistical. They are driven onward by a spirit they cannot control, and they live their lives seeking the satisfaction which they are doomed never to find.

Such a creed must seem incredibly naive and unsophisticated to many readers of to-day who have been brought up on a diet of realism and psychology. Moreover, they find something irritating in Scott's apparent lack of any impulse to analyze or to theorize. "There they are", he seems to say; "I paint the world as I see it." But he makes no attempt to anatomize these hard hearts, nor to discover the cause in Nature which breeds them;

much less is he inclined to arraign the universe of which they are one manifestation. Most men he finds to be mixtures of good and bad, and their characters are determined by a surplusage of the one or the other. Speculations as to why and whence and whither did not attract him, and he would probably have estimated at no great price the most precious discoveries of our own day in those fields.

Besides his skill in the presentation of humble characters, and in the spirited recital of an adventurous story, Scott's intense absorption in all kinds of human experience delights his more intelligent readers in a thousand different ways. It may be now in a shrewd observation, now in his keen perception of the essentials of a situation, now in his easy marshalling of relevant economic facts. He takes for granted in his readers an interest in a multitude of things besides the story. A beautiful bend in a stream, some tale associated with an ancient ruin, some whimsicality of character is a sufficient reason for loitering by the way. The plot proceeds with breathless speed when he wishes it to do so, but it is also pleasant *desipere in loco*, especially when we may enjoy the mild shocks of pleasure which come from associating with an active mind. We become infected with Scott's own naive delight in all things; the pleasures that can flow from the mere exercise of an active intelligence constantly reveal themselves. It is difficult to choose illustrations where examples meet one on every page. Here is a single sentence from *The Bride of Lammermoor:* "The old woman was on her accustomed seat beneath the weeping birch, basking, with the listless enjoyment of age and infirmity, in the beams of the autumn sun." The little picture is faultlessly etched, yet it has not only the capacity to give us pleasure in itself, but also to set our

thoughts wandering through eternity. Meaning is everywhere present in Scott, whether in his narrative or in descriptive or reflective passages. It is this intense vitality of the writer that sweeps us along with him; it hardly occurs to us to question his assumption that all life is intensely interesting and full of hidden meaning. To say this is to praise an author highly, for it is acknowledging his power to remove the scales of familiarity from our eyes, and to communicate to us that increased zest in life which it is the high privilege of literature to give.

Perhaps the greatest pleasure which we derive from reading Scott's novels is the pleasure of becoming acquainted with the author himself. The novels contain no character more interesting, they relate no adventure more fascinating than that of his life. We know him more intimately, perhaps, than any other man of letters. Lockhart's monumental work, the memoirs of friends, and his own voluminous letters have left few of our questions unanswered. But it is in the *Journal* which he kept during the last years of his life that we know Scott most intimately. In many senses of the word it is the greatest, the best of all his books, and for the student of Scott it is the most indispensable. It avoids with astonishing success the pitfalls of sentimentalism and fine writing that beset the feet of the *poseur*. It was begun less than two months before financial ruin had overwhelmed him, and bitter personal afflictions settled one after the other on his devoted head. Instinctively, as sorrows rained upon him, he withdrew somewhat from the society of his friends, and his beloved *Journal* took their place. To it he confided his hopes and fears and perplexities. It is the witness to his petty irritations as much as to his courage and magnaminity and resoluteness of mind. Scott must have had at least some vague expectation that it would

be published eventually, and yet the illusion is almost perfect of a man communing with his own soul. It reveals a heart overflowing with generous impulses that nevertheless detests sentimentality; there is something strangely tonic in the picture unconsciously portrayed of a man whose blood and reason are so healthily commingled, who knows so much of passion and is not passion's slave. Perhaps no man ever lived who had a kinder, warmer heart, who relieved poverty, who helped his friends and enemies and strangers more than he did. Yet there is a limit. Here is a delightful entry in the *Journal:* "I do believe your destitute widow, especially if she has a charge of children, and one or two fit for patronage, is one of the most impudent animals living." The proud reticence of his temper based on a hatred of sentimentalism and all other forms of insincerity is constantly illustrated. Coming down to breakfast one morning he finds that Lockhart and Sophia, who were to leave that day, had already gone. To the *Journal* he confides: "This was very right. I hate red eyes and the blowing of noses. Of all schools commend me to the Stoic." After Lady Scott's death comparative strangers forced themselves on him and said conventional things which he hated, and he writes: "I cannot conceive the idea of forcing myself on strangers in distress. I have half a mind to turn sharp around on some of my consolers."

Whatever the reason, there are few spectacles that fascinate human beings so completely as the picture of the prosperous man who has fallen on evil days, and if the victim be a strong man with some elements of magnaminity in his character the spectacle takes on the interest of tragedy. It is what Chaucer calls the worst of ills—

A man to han been in prosperitee,
And it remembren when it passed is.

Scott's *Journal* gives us a unique record of his experience of Fortune's turning her smiling face away from him. He began it in November, 1825, and the sky was blue. He was the famous Sir Walter Scott. His eldest son had just married a charming lady with a magnificent fortune in her own right. His other son was a promising lad, a student at Oxford; Sophia, his eldest daughter was married to Lockhart. If Sir Walter had had to choose a son-in-law in all the world he would have preferred Lockhart to any other. Abbotsford was as proud a residence as even he wanted. He was possessed of fame and wealth and domestic happiness. In December a faint cloud suggests itself, but Scott, merely irritated, assures himself that it is nothing. By January 17 the blow had fallen, and beyond a doubt Scott was a penniless bankrupt.

Immediately offers of assistance poured in from high and low, and there was talk of a public subscription, which particularly irritated Scott. On two points he was clear: he would accept help from no one, and he would not take the easy way of bankruptcy. All his remaining strength should be devoted to paying his creditors if that were at all possible. He worked longer hours than ever on *Woodstock*, and when it was finished he began immediately on a nine-volume *Life of Napoleon*. But the story of his heroic struggle is too well known to be rehearsed here. In May Lady Scott died, and shortly afterward the doctors declared that Lockhart's boy, Scott's darling grandson, could live only a short time. "Hold thy hand, Fortune", he writes in the *Journal;* "it is not fair to rain blows so fast."

It would be a mistake to think of Scott as spending his

remaining years in an atmosphere of high heroics. The course he had chosen was to him the course of simple honesty. Two years after the crash he had earned for his creditors the sum of £40,000. He might have chosen the easier path of becoming a bankrupt. "But I could not have slept sound, as I now can under the comfortable impression of receiving the thanks of my creditors, and the conscious feeling of discharging my duty as a man of honour and honesty. I see before me a long, tedious and dark path, but it leads to stainless reputation. If I die in the harrows, as is very likely, I shall die with honour; if I achieve my task I shall have the thanks of all concerned, and the approbation of my own conscience." Nor must it be supposed that his grilling task was without its alleviations. He wrote his *Tales of a Grandfather*, for instance, with something of the high spirits and delight in the world of the past that had gone to the production of the great novels, as witness the following entry:

"This morning was damp, dripping and unpleasant, so I even made a work of necessity, and set to the *Tales* like a dragon. I murdered Maclellan of Bombay at the Thrieve Castle; stabbed the Black Douglas in the town of Stirling, astonished King James before Roxburgh; and stifled the Earl of Mar in his bath in the Cannongate. A wild world, my masters, this Scotland of ours must have been. No fear of want of interest; no lassitude in those days for want of work—

> For treason, d'ye see,
> Was to them a dish of tea
> And murder bread and butter."

There are many in our day who affect a kind of amused superiority toward a philosophy of life so simple as that of Sir Walter. To such it may be rejoined that it worked. In the novels he had drawn men and women assailed by

misfortune and rising to incredible heights of endurance, of courage, of self-abnegation. As we read the *Journal* we realize that he might have justified himself in the words of Jeanie Deans regarding her father. "I fearna for his life—I ken how strong-hearted he is—I ken it", laying her hand on her bosom, "by my ain heart at this minute." To know Scott is to love and admire him. Manly, sane, normal, rugged, are the words that first occur to one seeking to analyze his character, but if we follow his own practice and seek beneath the commonplace surface we shall find a life as dramatic, a character as heroic, as any of which his stories tell the tale.

We may take leave of him in the words of Carlyle, a most sincere, if somewhat grudging admirer: "Adieu, Sir Walter, pride of all Scotsmen, take our proud and sad farewell."

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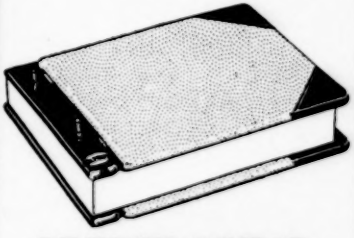

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